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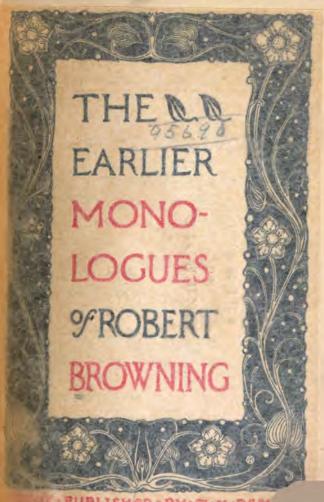
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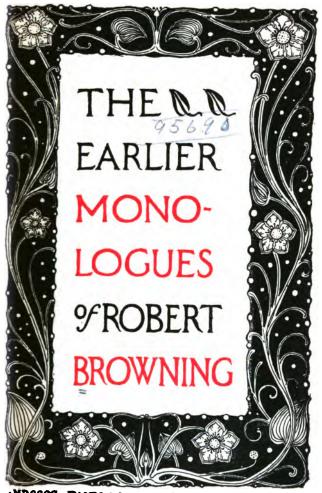
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BROWNING'S EARLIER MONOLOGUES

PAULINE

A FRAGMENT OF A CONFESSION

Non dubito, quin titulus libri nostri raritate sua quamplurimos alliciat ad legendum : inter quos nonnulli obliquæ opinionis, mente languidi, multi etiam maligni, et in ingenium nostrum ingrati accedent, qui temeraria sua ignorantia, vix conspecto titulo clamabunt: Nos vetita docere, hæresium semina jacere: piis auribus offendiculo, præclaris ingeniis scandalo esse: adeò conscientiæ suæ consulentes, ut nec Apollo, nec Musæ omnes, neque Angelus de cœlo me ab illorum execratione vindicare queant : quibus et ego nunc consulo, ne scripta nostra legant, nec intelligant, nec meminerint : nam noxia sunt, venenosa sunt : Acherontis ostium est in hoc libro, lapides loquitur, caveant, ne cerebrum illis excutiat. Vos autem, qui æqua mente ad legendum venitis, si tantam prudentiæ discretionem adhibueritis, quantam in melle legendo apes, jam securi legite. Puto namque vos et utilitatis haud parum et voluptatis plurimum accepturos. Quod si qua repereritis, quæ vobis non placeant, mittite illa, NAM ET EGO VOBIS ILLA NON PROBO, SED Cætera tamen propterea non respuite Ideo, si quid liberius dictum sit, ignoscite adolescentiæ nostræ, qui minor quam adolescens hoc opus composui.-H. Cor. Agrippa, De Occult. Phil.

London, January 1833. V. A. XX.

PAULINE, mine own, bend o'er me—thy soft breast Browning, Shall pant to mine-bend o'er me-thy sweet eyes, And loosened hair, and breathing lips, and arms Drawing me to thee—these build up a screen

confesses

love

Security To shut me in with thee, and from all fear, in her So that I mind So that I might unlock the sleepless brood Of fancies from my soul, their lurking-place, Nor doubt that each would pass, ne'er to return To one so watched, so loved, and so secured. But what can guard thee but thy naked love? Ah, dearest! whoso sucks a poisoned wound Envenoms his own veins,—thou art so good, So calm-if thou should'st wear a brow less light For some wild thought which, but for me, were

From out thy soul, as from a sacred star. Yet till I have unlocked them it were vain To hope to sing; some woe would light on me; Nature would point at one, whose quivering lip Was bathed in her enchantments—whose brow burned

Beneath the crown, to which her secrets knelt; 20 Who learned the spell which can call up the dead, And then departed, smiling like a fiend Who has deceived God. If such one should seek Again her altars, and stand robed and crowned Amid the faithful: sad confession first. Remorse and pardon, and old claims renewed, Ere I can be—as I shall be no more.

I had been spared this shame, if I had sate By thee for ever, from the first, in place Of my wild dreams of beauty and of good, 30 Or with them, as an earnest of their truth. No thought nor hope, having been shut from thee, No vague wish unexplained—no wandering aim Sent back to bind on Fancy's wings, and seek Some strange fair world, where it might be a law; But doubting nothing, had been led by thee, Thro' youth, and saved, as one at length awaked, Who has slept thro' a peril. Ah! vain, vain!

Restraint cast off

Thou lovest me—the past is in its grave, Tho' its ghost haunts us-still this much is ours, 40 To cast away restraint, lest a worse thing Wait for us in the darkness. Thou lovest me, And thou art to receive not love, but faith, For which thou wilt be mine, and smile, and take All shapes, and shames, and veil without a fear That form which music follows like a slave; And I look to thee, and I trust in thee, As in a Northern night one looks alway Unto the East for morn, and spring and joy. Thou seest then my aimless, hopeless state, 50 And resting on some few old feelings, won Back by thy beauty, would'st that I essay The task, which was to me what now thou art: And why should I conceal one weakness more?

Thou wilt remember one warm morn, when Winter Crept aged from the earth, and Spring's first breath Blew soft from the moist hills—the black-thorn boughs,

So dark in the bare wood; when glistening
In the sunshine were white with coming buds,
Like the bright side of a sorrow—and the banks 60
Had violets opening from sleep like eyes—
I walked with thee, who knew not a deep shame
Lurked beneath smiles and careless words, which
sought

To hide it—till they wandered and were mute; As we stood listening on a sunny mound

Song once To the wind murmuring in the damp copse, as dear as Pauline Like heavy breathings of some hidden thing Betrayed by sleep-until the feeling rushed That I was low indeed, yet not so low As to endure the calmness of thine eyes: 70 And so I told thee all, while the cool breast I leaned on altered not its quiet beating; And long ere words, like a hurt bird's complaint, Bade me look up and be what I had been, I felt despair could never live by thee. Thou wilt remember: -- thou art not more dear Than song was once to me; and I ne'er sung But as one entering bright halls, where all Will rise and shout for him. Sure I must own That I am fallen-having chosen gifts 80 Distinct from theirs-that I am sad-and fain Would give up all to be but where I was; Not high as I had been, if faithful found-But low and weak, yet full of hope, and sure Of goodness as of life—that I would lose All this gay mastery of mind, to sit Once more with them, trusting in truth and love, And with an aim—not being what I am. Oh, Pauline! I am ruined! who believed That tho' my soul had floated from its sphere Of wide dominion into the dim orb Of self—that it was strong and free as ever:-

It has conformed itself to that dim orb,
Reflecting all its shades and shapes, and now
Must stay where it alone can be adored.
I have felt this in dreams—in dreams in which
I seemed the fate from which I fled; I felt
A strange delight in causing my decay;
I was a fiend, in darkness chained for ever

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Within some ocean-cave; and ages rolled, 100 Dreams Till thro' the cleft rock, like a moonbeam, came A white swan to remain with me; and ages Rolled, yet I tired not of my first joy In gazing on the peace of its pure wings. And then I said, "It is most fair to me, "Yet its soft wings must sure have suffered change "From the thick darkness—sure its eyes are dim— "Its silver pinions must be cramped and numbed "With sleeping ages here; it cannot leave me, "For it would seem, in light, beside its kind, 110 "Withered-tho' here to me most beautiful." And then I was a young witch, whose blue eyes, As she stood naked by the river springs, Drew down a god—I watched his radiant form Growing less radiant—and it gladdened me; Till one morn, as he sat in the sunshine Upon my knees, singing to me of heaven, He turned to look at me, ere I could lose The grin with which I viewed his perishing. And he shrieked and departed, and sat long By his deserted throne—but sunk at last, Murmuring, as I kissed his lips and curled Around him, "I am still a god-to thee." Still I can lay my soul bare in its fall, For all the wandering and all the weakness Will be a saddest comment on the song. And if, that done, I can be young again, I will give up all gained as willingly As one gives up a charm which shuts him out From hope, or part, or care, in human kind. As life wanes, all its cares, and strife, and toil, Seem strangely valueless, while the old trees Which grew by our youth's home—the waving mass

The Sun- Of climbing plants, heavy with bloom and dewtreader's Shelley's The morning swallows with their songs like words.

All these seem clear and only worth our thoughts. So aught connected with my early life-My rude songs or my wild imaginings, How I look on them—most distinct amid The fever and the stir of after years! 140

I ne'er had ventured e'en to hope for this, Had not the glow I felt at His award, Assured me all was not extinct within. Him whom all honor-whose renown springs up Like sunlight which will visit all the world; So that e'en they who sneered at him at first, Come out to it, as some dark spider crawls From his foul nets, which some lit torch invades, Yet spinning still new films for his retreat.-Thou didst smile, poet,—but, can we forgive? 150

Sun-treader-life and light be thine for ever; Thou art gone from us-years go by-and spring Gladdens, and the young earth is beautiful, Yet thy songs come not-other bards arise, But none like thee-they stand-thy majesties, Like mighty works which tell some Spirit there Hath sat regardless of neglect and scorn, Till, its long task completed, it hath risen And left us, never to return: and all Rush in to peer and praise when all in vain. 160 The air seems bright with thy past presence yet, But thou art still for me, as thou hast been When I have stood with thee, as on a throne With all thy dim creations gathered round

Like mountains,—and I felt of mould like them,
And creatures of my own were mixed with them,
Like things half-lived, catching and giving life.
But thou art still for me, who have adored,
Tho' single, panting but to hear thy name,
Which I believed a spell to me alone,
Scarce deeming thou wert as a star to men—
As one should worship long a sacred spring
Scarce worth a moth's flitting, which long grasses
cross,

And one small tree embowers droopingly, Joving to see some wandering insect won, To live in its few rushes—or some locust To pasture on its boughs-or some wild bird Stoop for its freshness from the trackless air, And then should find it but the fountain-head, Long lost, of some great river—washing towns 180 And towers, and seeing old woods which will live But by its banks, untrod of human foot, Which, when the great sun sinks, lie quivering In light as some thing lieth half of life Before God's foot-waiting a wondrous change -Then girt with rocks which seek to turn or stay Its course in vain, for it does ever spread Like a sea's arm as it goes rolling on, Being the pulse of some great country—so Wert thou to me-and art thou to the world. 190 And I, perchance, half feel a strange regret, That I am not what I have been to thee: Like a girl one has loved long silently, In her first loveliness, in some retreat, When first emerged, all gaze and glow to view Her fresh eyes, and soft hair, and lips which bleed

Shelley Like a mountain berry. Doubtless it is sweet too pure To see her thus adored—but there have been Moments, when all the world was in his praise, Sweeter than all the pride of after hours. Yet. Sun-treader, all hail!—from my heart's heart

> I bid thee hail!-e'en in my wildest dreams, I am proud to feel I would have thrown up all The wreathes of fame which seemed o'erhanging

To have seen thee, for a moment, as thou art,

And if thou livest-if thou lovest, spirit! Remember me, who set this final seal To wandering thought—that one so pure as thou Could never die. Remember me, who flung All honor from my soul-yet paused and said, 210 "There is one spark of love remaining yet, "For I have nought in common with him-shapes "Which followed him avoid me, and foul forms "Seek me, which ne'er could fasten on his mind; "And tho' I feel how low I am to him. "Yet I aim not even to catch a tone "Of all the harmonies which he called up, "So one gleam still remains, altho' the last." Remember me—who praise thee e'en with tears, For never more shall I walk calm with thee; Thy sweet imaginings are as an air, A melody, some wond'rous singer sings, Which, though it haunt men oft in the still eve, They dream not to essay; yet it no less, But more is honored. I was thine in shame. And now when all thy proud renown is out, I am a watcher, whose eyes have grown dim

With looking for some star—which breaks on him, Altered, and worn, and weak, and full of tears.

His
"proud
renown"
seen
by "the

Autumn has come—like Spring returned to us, 230 scoffer Won from her girlishness—like one returned A friend that was a lover—nor forgets

The first warm love, but full of sober thoughts
Of fading years; whose soft mouth quivers yet
With the old smile—but yet so changed and still!
And here am I the scoffer, who have probed
Life's vanity, won by a word again
Into my old life—for one little word
Of this sweet friend, who lives in loving me,
Lives strangely on my thoughts, and looks, and
words,

As fathoms down some nameless ocean thing Its silent course of quietness and joy. O dearest, if, indeed, I tell the past, May'st thou forget it as a sad sick dream: Or if it linger-my lost soul too soon Sinks to itself, and whispers, we shall be But closer linked—two creatures whom the earth Bears singly—with strange feelings, unrevealed But to each other; or two lonely things Created by some Power, whose reign is done, 250 Having no part in God, or his bright world, I am to sing; whilst ebbing day dies soft, As a lean scholar dies, worn o'er his book, And in the heaven stars steal out one by one, As hunted men steal to their mountain watch. I must not think-lest this new impulse die In which I trust. I have no confidence, So I will sing on-fast as fancies come Rudely—the verse being as the mood it paints.

Program I strip my mind bare—whose first elements 260 of con. I shall unveil—not as they struggled forth In infancy, nor as they now exist, That I am grown above them, and can rule them, But in that middle stage, when they were full, Yet ere I had disposed them to my will; And then I shall show how these elements Produced my present state, and what it is. I am made up of an intensest life. Of a most clear idea of consciousness Of self-distinct from all its qualities, From all affections, passions, feelings, powers; And thus far it exists, if tracked in all. But linked in me, to self-supremacy, Existing as a centre to all things. Most potent to create, and rule, and call Upon all things to minister to it; And to a principle of restlessness Which would be all, have, see, know, taste, feel, ـــااء

This is myself; and I should thus have been, Though gifted lower than the meanest soul.

And of my powers, one springs up to save From utter death a soul with such desires Confined to clay—which is the only one Which marks me-an imagination which Has been an angel to me-coming not In fitful visions, but beside me ever. And never failing me; so tho' my mind Forgets not-not a shred of life forgets-Yet I can take a secret pride in calling The dark past up-to quell it regally.

290

280

Lode-star of Theism

A mind like this must dissipate itself, But I have always had one lode-star; now, As I look back, I see that I have wasted, Or progressed as I looked toward that star-A need, a trust, a yearning after God, A feeling I have analysed but late, But it existed, and was reconciled With a neglect of all I deemed his laws, Which yet, when seen in others, I abhorred. I felt as one beloved, and so shut in From fear-and thence I date my trust in signs And omens-for I saw God every where; And I can only lay it to the fruit Of a sad after-time that I could doubt Even his being-having always felt His presence—never acting from myself, Still trusting in a hand that leads me through All danger; and this feeling still has fought Against my weakest reason and resolves.

And I can love nothing—and this dull truth
Has come the last—but sense supplies a love
Encircling me and mingling with my life.

These make myself—for I have sought in vain To trace how they we formed by circumstance, For I still find them—turning my wild youth Where they alone displayed themselves, converting All objects to their use—now see their course!

They came to me in my first dawn of life, Which passed alone with wisest ancient books, All halo-girt with fancies of my own, And I myself went with the tale—a god,

The poet's Wandering after beauty—or a giant, life in the imaginary Standing vast in the sunset—an old hunter, Talking with gods-or a high-crested chief, Sailing with troops of friends to Tenedos;-I tell you, nought has ever been so clear As the place, the time, the fashion of those lives. I had not seen a work of lofty art, Nor woman's beauty, nor sweet nature's face, Yet, I say, never morn broke clear as those 330 On the dim clustered isles in the blue sea: The deep groves, and white temples, and wet caves-

> And nothing ever will surprise me now-Who stood beside the naked Swift-footed, Who bound my forehead with Proserpine's hair.

And strange it is, that I who could so dream, Should e'er have stooped to aim at aught beneath-

Aught low, or painful, but I never doubted; So as I grew, I rudely shaped my life To my immediate wants, yet strong beneath 340 Was a vague sense of powers folded up-A sense that tho' those shadowy times were past, Their spirit dwelt in me, and I should rule.

Then came a pause, and long restraint chained down

My soul, till it was changed. I lost myself, And were it not that I so loathe that time. I could recall how first I learned to turn My mind against itself; and the effects, In deeds for which remorse were vain, as for The wanderings of delirious dream; yet thence 350 Came cunning, envy, falsehood, which so long Have spotted me-at length I was restored, Yet long the influence remained; and nought But the still life I led, apart from all, Which left my soul to seek its old delights, Could e'er have brought me thus far back to peace. As peace returned, I sought out some pursuit: And song rose-no new impulse-but the one With which all others best could be combined. My life has not been that of those whose heaven 360 Was lampless, save where poesy shone out; But as a clime, where glittering mountain-tops, And glancing sea, and forests steeped in light, Give back reflected the far-flashing sun; For music, (which is earnest of a heaven, Seeing we know emotions strange by it, Not else to be revealed,) is as a voice, A low voice calling Fancy, as a friend, To the green woods in the gay summer time. And she fills all the way with dancing shapes, 370 Which have made painters pale; and they go on While stars look at them, and winds call to them, As they leave life's path for the twilight world, Where the dead gather. This was not at first, For I scarce knew what I would do. I had No wish to paint, no yearning-but I sang.

His mind turned against itself; but "Song rose"

And first I sang, as I in dream have seen, Music wait on a lyrist for some thought, Yet singing to herself until it came.

I turned to those old times and scenes, where all That's beautiful had birth for me, and made 38: Rude verses on them all; and then I paused—I had done nothing, so I sought to know

Mighty What mind had yet achieved. No fear was mine bards exemplify As I gazed on the works of mighty bards, his powers In the first joy at finding my own thoughts Recorded, and my powers exemplified, And feeling their aspirings were my own. And then I first explored passion and mind; And I began afresh; I rather sought 390 To rival what I wondered at, than form Creations of my own; so much was light Lent back by others, yet much was my own.

> I paused again-a change was coming on, I was no more a boy-the past was breaking Before the coming, and like fever worked. I first thought on myself-and here my powers Burst out. I dreamed not of restraint, but gazed On all things: schemes and systems went and came, And I was proud (being vainest of the weak), 400 In wandering o'er them, to seek out some one To be my own; as one should wander o'er The white way for a star.

> On one, whom praise of mine would not offend, Who was as calm as beauty-being such Unto mankind as thou to me, Pauline, Believing in them, and devoting all His soul's strength to their winning back to peace; Who sent forth hopes and longings for their sake, Clothed in all passion's melodies, which first Caught me, and set me, as to a sweet task, To gather every breathing of his songs. And woven with them there were words, which seemed

A key to a new world; the muttering

Of angels, of some thing unguessed by man. How my heart beat, as I went on, and found Much there, I felt my own mind had conceived, But there living and burning! Soon the whole Of his conceptions dawned on me; their praise Is in the tongues of men; men's brows are high When his name means a triumph and a pride; 421 So my weak hands may well forbear to dim What then seemed my bright fate: I threw myself To meet it. I was vowed to liberty, Men were to be as gods, and earth as heaven.

And I-ah! what a life was mine to be, My whole soul rose to meet it. Now, Pauline,

I shall go mad, if I recall that time.

One who

O let me look back, ere I leave for ever The time, which was an hour, that one waits For a fair girl that comes a withered hag! And I was lonely,-far from woods and fields, And amid dullest sights, who should be loose As a stag-yet I was full of joy-who lived With Plato—and who had the key to life. And I had dimly shaped my first attempt, And many a thought did I build up on thought, As the wild bee hangs cell to cell-in vain; For I must still go on: my mind rests not.

'Twas in my plan to look on real life, 440 Which was all new to me; my theories Were firm, so I left them, to look upon Men, and their cares, and hopes, and fears, and

And, as I pondered on them all, I sought

Real life How best life's end might be attained—an end a dream Comprising every joy. I deeply mused.

> And suddenly, without heart-wreck, I awoke As from a dream-I said, 'twas beautiful, Yet but a dream; and so adieu to it. As some world-wanderer sees in a far meadow 450 Strange towers, and walled gardens, thick with trees,

Where singing goes on, and delicious mirth, And laughing fairy creatures peeping over, And on the morrow, when he comes to live For ever by those springs, and trees, fruit-flushed And fairy bowers—all his search is vain. Well I remember * * * *

First went my hopes of perfecting mankind,

And faith in them-then freedom in itself. And virtue in itself-and then my motives' ends, And powers and loves; and human love went last. 46I I felt this no decay, because new powers Rose as old feelings left-wit, mockery, And happiness; for I had oft been sad, Mistrusting my resolves: but now I cast Hope joyously away—I laughed and said, "No more of this"—I must not think; at length

I look'd again to see how all went on. My powers were greater—as some temple seemed My soul, where nought is changed, and incense rolls 470

Around the altar-only God is gone, And some dark spirit sitteth in his seat! So I passed through the temple; and to me Knelt troops of shadows; and they cried, "Hail, king!

His powers grown but Goo

"We serve thee now, and thou shalt serve no more!

"Call on us, prove us, let us worship thee!"
And I said, "Are ye strong—let fancy bear me
"Far from the past."—And I was borne away
As Arab birds float sleeping in the wind,
O'er deserts, towers, and forests, I being calm; 480
And I said, "I have nursed up energies,
"They will prey on me." And a band knelt low,
And cried, "Lord, we are here, and we will make

"A way for thee—in thine appointed life

"O look on us!" And I said, "Ye will worship "Me; but my heart must worship too." They shouted,

"Thyself—thou art our king!" So I stood there Smiling * * * * * *

And buoyant and rejoicing was the spirit
With which I looked out how to end my days; 490
I felt once more myself—my powers were mine;
I found that youth or health so lifted me,
That, spite of all life's vanity, no grief
Came nigh me—I must ever be light-hearted;
And that this feeling was the only veil
Betwixt me and despair: so if age came,
I should be as a wreck linked to a soul
Yet fluttering, or mind-broken, and aware
Of my decay. So a long summer morn
Found me; and e'er noon came, I had resolved 500
No age should come on me, ere youth's hopes
went,

Vanity

For I would wear myself out—like that morn of success Which wasted not a sunbeam—every joy I would make mine, and die; and thus I sought To chain my spirit down, which I had fed With thoughts of fame. I said, the troubled life Of genius seen so bright when working forth Some trusted end, seems sad, when all in vain-Most sad, when men have parted with all joy For their wild fancy's sake, which waited first, 51c As an obedient spirit, when delight Came not with her alone, but alters soon, Coming darkened, seldom, hasting to depart, Leaving a heavy darkness and warm tears.

> But I shall never lose her; she will live Brighter for such seclusion—I but catch A hue, a glance of what I sing, so pain Is linked with pleasure, for I ne'er may tell The radiant sights which dazzle me; but now They shall be all my own, and let them fade Untold-others shall rise as fair, as fast. And when all's done, the few dim gleams transferred.-

> (For a new thought sprung up—that it were well To leave all shadowy hopes, and weave such lays As would encircle me with praise and love; So I should not die utterly-I should bring One branch from the gold forest, like the knight Of old tales, witnessing I had been there,)-And when all's done, how vain seems e'en success, And all the influence poets have o'er men! 530 'Tis a fine thing that one, weak as myself, Should sit in his lone room, knowing the words He utters in his solitude shall move

Men like a swift wind—that tho' he be forgotten, Fair eyes shall glisten when his beauteous dreams Of love come true in happier frames than his. Ay, the still night brought thoughts like these, but morn

His oul's idol Shelley again

Came, and the mockery again laughed out
At hollow praises, and smiles, almost sneers;
And my soul's idol seemed to whisper me
540
To dwell with him and his unhonoured name—
And I well knew my spirit, that would be
First in the struggle, and again would make
All bow to it; and I would sink again.

And then know that this curse will come on us, To see our idols perish—we may wither, Nor marvel—we are clay; but our low fate Should not extend to them, whom trustingly We sent before into Time's yawning gulf, To face whate'er may lurk in darkness there— 550 To see the painters' glory pass, and feel Sweet music move us not as once, or worst, To see decaying wits ere the frail body Decays. Nought makes me trust in love so really, As the delight of the contented lowness With which I gaze on souls 1'd keep for ever In beauty—I'd be sad to equal them; I'd feed their fame e'en from my heart's best blood, Withering unseen, that they might flourish still.

Pauline, my sweet friend, thou dost not forget 560 How this mood swayed me, when thou first wert mine.

When I had set myself to live this life, delights Defying all opinion. Ere thou camest I was most happy, sweet, for old delights Had come like birds again; music, my life, I nourished more than ever, and old lore Loved for itself, and all it shows—the king Treading the purple calmly to his death, -While round him, like the clouds of eve, all dusk.

> The giant shades of fate, silently flitting, 570 Pile the dim outline of the coming doom, -And him sitting alone in blood, while friends Are hunting far in the sunshine; and the boy, With his white breast and brow and clustering curls Streaked with his mother's blood, and striving hard To tell his story ere his reason goes. And when I loved thee, as I've loved so oft, Thou lovedst me, and I wondered, and looked in My heart to find some feeling like such love, Believing I was still what I had been; 580 And soon I found all faith had gone from me, And the late glow of life-changing like clouds, 'Twas not the morn-blush widening into day, But evening, coloured by the dying sun While darkness is quick hastening:—I will tell My state as though 'twere none of mine-despair Cannot come near me—thus it is with me. Souls alter not, and mine must progress still; And this I knew not when I flung away My youth's chief aims. I ne'er supposed the loss Of what few I retained; for no resource 591 Awaits me—now behold the change of all. I cannot chain my soul, it will not rest In its clay prison; this most narrow sphere

It has strange powers, and feelings, and desires, Which I cannot account for, nor explain, But which I stifle not, being bound to trust All feelings equally—to hear all sides:
Yet I cannot indulge them, and they live, Referring to some state or life unknown. . . 600

" Hear ill sides"

My selfishness is satiated not, It wears me like a flame; my hunger for All pleasure, howsoe'er minute, is pain; I envy-how I envy him whose mind Turns with its energies to some one end! To elevate a sect, or a pursuit, However mean—so my still baffled hopes Seek out abstractions; I would have but one Delight on earth, so it were wholly mine; One rapture all my soul could fill—and this Wild feeling places me in dream afar, In some wide country, where the eye can see No end to the far hills and dales bestrewn With shining towers and dwellings. I grow mad Well-nigh, to know not one abode but holds Some pleasure-for my soul could grasp them all, But must remain with this vile form. With hope to age at last, which quenching much, May let me concentrate the sparks it spares. This restlessness of passion meets in me 620 A craving after knowledge: the sole proof Of a commanding will is in that power Repressed; for I beheld it in its dawn, That sleepless harpy, with its budding wings, And I considered whether I should yield All hopes and fears, to live alone with it, Finding a recompense in its wild eyes;

A chained will I found that I should perish so,
I bade its wild eyes close from me for ever;—
And I am left alone with my delights,—
So it lies in me a chained thing—still ready
To serve me, if I loose its slightest bond—
I cannot but be proud of my bright slave.

And thus I know this earth is not my sphere, For I cannot so narrow me, but that I still exceed it; in their elements My love would pass my reason—but since here Love must receive its objects from this earth, While reason will be chainless, the few truths Caught from its wanderings have sufficed to quell All love below; —then what must be that love 641 Which, with the object it demands, would quell Reason, tho' it soared with the seraphim? No-what I feel may pass all human love, Yet fall far short of what my love should be; And yet I seem more warped in this than aught For here myself stands out more hideously. I can forget myself in friendship, fame, Or liberty, or love of mighty souls.

But I begin to know what thing hate is—
To sicken, and to quiver, and grow white,
And I myself have furnished its first prey.
All my sad weaknesses, this wavering will,
This selfishness, this still decaying frame...
But I must never grieve while I can pass
Far from such thoughts—as now—Andromeda!
And she is with me—years roll, I shall change,
But change can touch her not—so beautiful

With her dark eyes, earnest and still, and hair
Lifted and spread by the salt-sweeping breeze; 660
And one red-beam, all the storm leaves in heaven,
Resting upon her eyes and face and hair,
As she awaits the snake on the wet beach,
By the dark rock, and the white wave just
breaking

At her feet; quite naked and alone,—a thing You doubt not, nor fear for, secure that God Will come in thunder from the stars to save her. Let it pass—I will call another change. I will be gifted with a wond'rous soul, Yet sunk by error to men's sympathy, 670 And in the wane of life; yet only so As to call up their fears, and there shall come A time requiring youth's best energies; And strait I fling age, sorrow, sickness off, And I rise triumphing over my decay.

And thus it is that I supply the chasm
'Twixt what I am and all that I would be.
But then to know nothing—to hope for nothing—
To seize on life's dull joys from a strange fear, 679
Lest, losing them, all's lost, and nought remains.

There's some vile juggle with my reason here—I feel I but explain to my own loss
These impulses—they live no less the same.
Liberty! what though I despair—my blood
Rose not at a slave's name proudlier than now,
And sympathy obscured by sophistries.
Why have not I sought refuge in myself,

wild But for the woes I saw and could not stay—fancies And love!—do I not love thee, my Pauline?

I cherish prejudice, lest I be left

Utterly loveless—witness this belief
In poets, tho' sad change has come there too;
No more I leave myself to follow them:
Unconsciously I measure me by them.
Let me forget it; and I cherish most
My love of England—how her name—a word
Of her's in a strange tongue makes my heart
beat!..

Pauline, I could do any thing—not now—All's fever—but when calm shall come again—I am prepared—I have made life my own—700 I would not be content with all the change One frame should feel—but I have gone in thought Thro' all conjuncture—I have lived all life When it is most alive—where strangest fate New shapes it past surmise—the tales of men Bit by some curse—or in the grasps of doom Half-visible and still increasing round, Or crowning their wide being's general aim....

These are wild fancies, but I feel, sweet friend,
As one breathing his weakness to the ear
Of pitying angel—dear as a winter flower;
A slight flower growing alone, and offering
Its frail cup of three leaves to the cold sun,
Yet joyous and confiding, like the triumph
Of a child—and why am I not worthy thee?

Living in natural objects

I can live all the life of plants, and gaze Drowsily on the bees that flit and play, Or bare my breast for sunbeams which will kill, Or open in the night of sounds, to look For the dim stars; I can mount with the bird, 720 Leaping airily his pyramid of leaves And twisted boughs of some tall mountain tree, Or rise cheerfully springing to the heavens—Or like a fish breathe in the morning air In the misty sun-warm water—or with flowers And trees can smile in light at the sinking sun, Just as the storm comes—as a girl would look On a departing lover—most serene.

Pauline, come with me—see how I could build A home for us, out of the world; in thought— I am inspired—come with me, Pauline!

Night, and one single ridge of narrow path Between the sullen river and the woods Waving and muttering—for the moonless night Has shaped them into images of life, Like the upraising of the giant-ghosts, Looking on earth to know how their sons fare. Thou art so close by me, the roughest swell Of wind in the tree-tops hides not the panting Of thy soft breasts; no-we will pass to morning-Morning—the rocks, and vallies, and old woods 741 How the sun brightens in the mist, and here,— Half in the air, like creatures of the place, Trusting the element-living on high boughs That swing in the wind-look at the golden spray, Flung from the foam-sheet of the cataract, Amid the broken rocks—shall we stay here

A home out of the world With the wild hawks?—no, ere the hot noon come Dive we down-safe; see this our new retreat Walled in with a sloped mound of matted shrubs, 750 Dark, tangled, old and green-still sloping down To a small pool whose waters lie asleep Amid the trailing boughs turned water-plants And tall trees over-arch to keep us in, Breaking the sunbeams into emerald shafts, And in the dreamy water one small group Of two or three strange trees are got together, Wondering at all around—as strange beasts herd Together far from their own land-all wildness-No turf nor moss, for boughs and plants pave all, 760 And tongues of bank go shelving in the waters, Where the pale-throated snake reclines his head, And old grey stones lie making eddies there; The wild mice cross them dry-shod-deeper in-Shut thy soft eyes—now look—still deeper in: This is the very heart of the woods—all round. Mountain-like, heaped above us; yet even here One pond of water gleams—far off the river Sweeps like a sea, barred out from land; but one-One thin clear sheet has over-leaped and wound 270 Into this silent depth, which gained, it lies Still, as but let by sufferance; the trees bend O'er it as wild men watch a sleeping girl, And thro' their roots long creeping plants stretch

Their twined hair, steeped and sparkling; farther

Tall rushes and thick flag-knots have combined To narrow it; so, at length, a silver thread It winds, all noiselessly, thro' the deep wood, Till thro' a cleft way, thro' the moss and stone, It joins its parent-river with a shout.

Up for the glowing day—leave the old woods:

See, they part, like a ruined arch, the sky!

Nothing but sky appears, so close the root

And grass of the hill-top level with the air—

Blue sunny air, where a great cloud floats, laden

With light, like a dead whale that white birds pick,

Floating away in the sun in some north sea.

Air, air—fresh life-blood—thin and searching air—

The clear, dear breath of God, that loveth us:

Where small birds reel and winds take their de
light.

Water is beautiful, but not like air.

See, where the solid azure waters lie,
Made as of thickened air, and down below,
The fern-ranks, like a forest spread themselves,
As tho' each pore could feel the element;
Where the quick glancing serpent winds his way—
Float with me there, Pauline, but not like air.
Down the hill—stop—a clump of trees, see, set
On a heap of rocks, which look o'er the far plains,
And envious climbing shrubs would mount to rest,
And peer from their spread boughs. There they
wave, looking

At the muleteers, who whistle as they go
To the merry chime of their morning bells, and all
The little smoking cots, and fields, and banks,
And copses, bright in the sun; my spirit wanders.
Hedge-rows for me—still, living, hedge-rows,
where

The bushes close, and clasp above, and keep Thought in—I am concentrated—I feel;—But my soul saddens when it looks beyond; I cannot be immortal, nor taste all.

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810

Pauline comments O God! where does this tend—these struggling

What would I have? what is this "sleep," which

To bound all? can there be a "waking" point Of crowning life? The soul would never rule—

1 Je crains bien que mon pauvre ami ne soit pas toujours parfaitement compris dans ce qui reste à lire de cet étrange fragment-mais il est moins propre que tout autre à éclaircir ce qui de sa nature ne peut jamais être que songe et confusion. D'ailleurs je ne sais trop si en cherchant à mieux co-ordonner certaines parties l'on ne courrait pas le risque de nuire au seul mérite auquel une production si singulière peut prétendre-celui de donner une idée assez précise du genre qu'elle n'a fait qu'ébaucher.-Ce début sans prétention, ce remuement des passions qui va d'abord en accroissant et puis s'appaise par degrés, ces élans de l'âme, ce retour soudain sur soi-même et par dessus tout, la tournure d'esprit toute particulière de mon ami rendent les changemens presque impossibles. Les raisons qu'il fait valoir ailleurs, et d'autres encore plus puissantes, ont fait trouver grâce à mes yeux pour cet écrit qu'autrement je lui eusse conseillé de jeter au feu.- Je n'en crois pas moins au grand principe de toute composition-à ce principe de Shakspeare, de Raffaëlle, de Beethoven, d'où il suit que la concentration des idées est due bien plus à leur conception, qu'à leur mise en exécution . . . j'ai tout lieu de craindre que la première de ces qualités ne soit encore étrangère à mon ami-et je doute fort qu'un redoublement de travail lui fasse acquérir la seconde. Le mieux serait de brûler ceci ; mais que faire?

Je crois que dans ce qui suit il fait allusion à un certain examen qu'il fit autrefois de l'âme ou plutôt de son âme, pour découvrir la suite des objets auxquels il lui serait possible d'atteindre, et dont chacun une fois obtenu devait former une espèce de plateau d'où l'on pouvait apercevoir d'autres buts, d'autres projets, d'autres jouissances qui, à leur tour, devaient être surmontés. Il en résultait que l'oubli et le sommeil devaient tout terminer. Cette idée que je ne saisis pas parfaitement lui est peut-être aussi inintelligible qu'à moi.

PAULINE.

Yearning after God

It would be first in all things—it would have Its utmost pleasure filled,—but that complete Commanding for commanding sickens it. The last point that I can trace is, rest beneath Some better essence than itself—in weakness: This is "myself"—not what I think should be, And what is that I hunger for but God? My God, my God! let me for once look on thee As tho' nought else existed: we alone. And as creation crumbles, my soul's spark Expands till I can say, "Even from myself "I need thee, and I feel thee, and I love thee: "I do not plead my rapture in thy works "For love of thee-or that I feel as one

"Who cannot die-but there is that in me

"Which turns to thee, which loves, or which should love." 830

Why have I girt myself with this hell-dress? Why have I laboured to put out my life? Is it not in my nature to adore, And e'en for all my reason do I not Feel him, and thank him, and pray to him?—Now. Can I forego the trust that he loves me? Do I not feel a love which only one O thou pale form, so dimly seen, deep-eyed, I have denied thee calmly-do I not Pant when I read of thy consummate deeds, 840 And burn to see thy calm, pure truths out-flash The brightest gleams of earth's philosophy? Do I not shake to hear aught question thee?

If I am erring save me, madden me, Take from me powers, and pleasures-let me die Love of Ages, so I see thee: I am knit round

As with a charm, by sin and lust and pride,

Yet tho' my wandering dreams have seen all

shapes

Of strange delight, oft have I stood by thee— Have I been keeping lonely watch with thee, 850 In the damp night by weeping Olivet, Or leaning on thy bosom, proudly less— Or dying with thee on the lonely cross— Or witnessing thy bursting from the tomb!

A mortal, sin's familiar friend doth here Avow that he will give all earth's reward, But to believe and humbly teach the faith, In suffering, and poverty, and shame, Only believing he is not unloved

And now, my Pauline, I am thine for ever! 860 I feel the spirit which has buoyed me up Deserting me: and old shades gathering on; Yet while its last light waits, I would say much, And chiefly, I am glad that I have said That love which I have ever felt for thee, But seldom told; our hearts so beat together, That speech is mockery, but when dark hours come:

And I feel sad; and thou, sweet, deem'st it strange;

A sorrow moves me, thou canst not remove.

Look on this lay I dedicate to thee,

Which thro' thee I began, and which I end,

Collecting the last gleams to strive to tell

That I am thine, and more than ever now—

That I am sinking fast—yet tho' I sink,

No less I feel that thou hast brought me bliss, And that I still may hope to win it back. Thou know'st, dear friend, I could not think all calm.

Wild dreams— Immortal life

For wild dreams followed me, and bore me off, And all was indistinct. Ere one was caught Another glanced: so dazzled by my wealth, 880 Knowing not which to leave nor which to choose, For all my thoughts so floated, nought was fixed—And then thou said'st a perfect bard was one Who shadowed out the stages of all life, And so thou badest me tell this my first stage;—'Tis done: and even now I feel all dim the shift Of thought. These are my last thoughts; I discern

Faintly immortal life, and truth, and good. And why thou must be mine is, that e'en now, In the dim hush of night—that I have done— 890 With fears and sad forebodings: I look thro' And say, "E'en at the last I have her still, "With her delicious eyes as clear as heaven,

"When rain in a quick shower has beat down

mist,

"And clouds float white in the sun like broods of swans."

How the blood lies upon her cheek, all spread As thinned by kisses; only in her lips It wells and pulses like a living thing, And her neck looks, like marble misted o'er With love-breath, a dear thing to kiss and love, 900 Standing beneath me—looking out to me, As I might kill her and be loved for it.

"Love

Love me-love me, Pauline, love nought but me; Leave me not. All these words are wild and weak, "leave Leave me not. Pauline. I stooped so low But to behold thee purer by my side, To show thou art my breath-my life-a last Resource-an extreme want: never believe Aught better could so look to thee, nor seek Again the world of good thoughts left for me. 910 There were bright troops of undiscovered suns, Each equal in their radiant course. There were Clusters of far fair isles, which ocean kept For his own joy, and his waves broke on them Without a choice. And there was a dim crowd Of visions, each a part of the dim whole. And a star left his peers and came with peace Upon a storm, and all eyes pined for him. And one isle harboured a sea-beaten ship, And the crew wandered in its bowers, and plucked Its fruits, and gave up all their hopes for home. And one dream came to a pale poet's sleep, And he said, "I am singled out by God,"
"No sin must touch me." I am very weak, But what I would express is, -Leave me not, Still sit by me-with beating breast, and hair Loosened—watching earnest by my side, Turning my books, or kissing me when I Look up—like summer wind. Be still to me A key to music's mystery, when mind fails, A reason, a solution and a clue. You see I have thrown off my prescribed rules: I hope in myself-and hope, and pant, and love-You'll find me better-know me more than when You loved me as I was. Smile not; I have Much yet to gladden you-to dawn on you.

No more of the past-I'll look within no more- Hand in I have too trusted to my own wild wants-Too trusted to myself—to intuition. Draining the wine alone in the still night, 940 And seeing how-as gathering films arose, As by an inspiration life seemed bare And grinning in its vanity, and ends Hard to be dreamed of, stared at me as fixed, And others suddenly became all foul, As a fair witch turned an old hag at night. No more of this—we will go hand in hand, I will go with thee, even as a child, Looking no further than thy sweet commands. And thou hast chosen where this life shall be-The land which gave me thee shall be our home, Where nature lies all wild amid her lakes And snow-swathed mountains, and vast pines all girt

With ropes of snow—where nature lies all bare, Suffering none to view her but a race Most stinted and deformed—like the mute dwarfs Which wait upon a naked Indian queen. And there (the time being when the heavens are thick

With storms) I'll sit with thee while thou dost sing

Thy native songs, gay as a desert bird
Who crieth as he flies for perfect joy,
Or telling me old stories of dead knights.
Or I will read old lays to thee—how she,
The fair pale sister, went to her chill grave
With power to love, and to be loved, and live.
Or we will go together, like twin gods
Of the infernal world, with scented lamp

Making an end in perfect joy

Over the dead—to call and to awake—
Over the unshaped images which lie
Within my mind's cave—only leaving all 970
That tells of the past doubts. So when spring comes,
And sunshine comes again like an old smile,
And the fresh waters, and awakened birds,
And budding woods await us—I shall be
Prepared, and we will go and think again,
And all old loves shall come to us—but changed
As some sweet thought which harsh words veiled
before:

Feeling God loves us, and that all that errs,
Is a strange dream which death will dissipate;
And then when I am firm we'll seek again 980
My own land, and again I will approach
My old designs, and calmly look on all
The works of my past weakness, as one views
Some scene where danger met him long before.
Ah! that such pleasant life should be but dreamed!

But whate'er come of it—and tho' it fade,
And tho' ere the cold morning all be gone
As it will be;—tho' music wait for me,
And fair eyes and bright wine, laughing like sin,
Which steals back softly on a soul half saved; 990
And I be first to deny all, and despise
This verse, and these intents which seem so fair:
Still this is all my own, this moment's pride,
No less I make an end in perfect joy.
E'en in my brightest time, a lurking fear
Possess'd me. I well knew my weak resolves,
I felt the witchery that makes mind sleep
Over its treasures—as one half afraid
To make his riches definite—but now

1000 God, truth, love, Shelley

These feelings shall not utterly be lost, I shall not know again that nameless care, Lest leaving all undone in youth, some new And undreamed end reveal itself too late: For this song shall remain to tell for ever. That when I lost all hope of such a change, Suddenly Beauty rose on me again. No less I make an end in perfect joy, For I, having thus again been visited, Shall doubt not many another bliss awaits, And tho' this weak soul sink, and darkness come, Some little word shall light it up again, And I shall see all clearer and love better: I shall again go o'er the tracts of thought, As one who has a right; and I shall live With poets-calmer-purer still each time, And beauteous shapes will come to me again, And unknown secrets will be trusted me. Which were not mine when wavering-but now I shall be priest and lover, as of old.

Sun-treader, I believe in God, and truth,
And love; and as one just escaped from death
Would bind himself in bands of friends to feel
He lives indeed—so, I would lean on thee;
Thou must be ever with me—most in gloom
When such shall come—but chiefly when I die,
For I seem dying, as one going in the dark
To fight a giant—and live thou for ever,
And be to all what thou hast been to me—
All in whom this wakes pleasant thoughts of me,
Know my last state is happy—free from doubt, 1030
Or touch of fear. Love me and wish me well!

RICHMOND, October 22, 1832.

CAVALIER TUNES¹

I-MARCHING ALONG

KENTISH Sir Byng stood for his King, Bidding the crop-headed Parliament swing: And, pressing a troop unable to stoop And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop, Marched them along, fifty-score strong, Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

11

God for King Charles! Pym and such carles To the devil that prompts 'em their treasonous parles!

Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup, Hands from the pasty, nor bite take nor sup Till you're (Chorus) marching along, fifty-score strong,

Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

¹ Such Poems as the following come properly enough, I suppose, under the head of "Dramatic Pieces;" being, though for the most part Lyric in expression, always Dramatic in principle, and so many utterances of so many imaginary persons, not mine.

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41

Ш

God for King Charles | Hampden to Hell, and his obsequies' knell Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Harry as well! England, good cheer! Rupert is near! Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here

(Cho.) Marching along, fifty-score strong, Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song?

IV

Then, God for King Charles! Pym and his snarls

To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent carles!

Hold by the right, you double your might;

So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for the fight,

(Cho.) March we along, fifty-score strong, Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song!

II---GIVE A ROUSE

.

King Charles, and who'll do him right now? King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now? Give a rouse: here's, in Hell's despite now, King Charles!

11

Who gave me the goods that went since? Who raised me the house that sank once?

Who helped me to gold I spent since? Who found me in wine you drank once?

"My boy George"

(Gho.) King Charles, and who'll do him right now?

King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?

Give a rouse: here's, in Hell's despite now,

King Charles!

111

To whom used my boy George quaff else, By the old fool's side that begot him? For whom did he cheer and laugh else, While Noll's damned troopers shot him?

(Cho.) King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in Hell's despite now,
King Charles!

III-BOOT AND SADDLE

Ĩ

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away! Rescue my Castle, before the hot day Brightens to blue from its silvery gray,

(Cho.) Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!

11

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say; Many's the friend there, will listen and pray "God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay,

(Cho.) "Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Ш

"My wife Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Gertrude" Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' array:
Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,
(Cho.) "Boot, saddle, to horse, and away?"

I۷

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and gay, Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay! "I've better counsellors; what counsel they? (Cho.) "Boot, saddle, to borse, and away!"

MY LAST DUCHESS

FERRARA

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall, Looking as if she were alive; I call That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands Worked busily a day, and there she stands. Will't please you sit and look at her? I said "Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read Strangers like you that pictured countenance, The depth and passion of its earnest glance, But to myself they turned (since none puts by The curtain I have drawn for you, but I) ro And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst, How such a glance came there; so, not the first

Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not Her husband's presence only, called that spot Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps Frà Pandolf chanced to say "Her mantle laps "Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint "Must never hope to reproduce the faint "Half-flush that dies along her throat;" such stuff

Too impressionable

Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough For calling up that spot of joy. She had A heart..how shall I say?.. too soon made glad,

Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good;

but thanked

Somehow.. I know not how.. as if she ranked My gift of a nine hundred years old name With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame This sort of trifling? Even had you skill In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will

Quite clear to such an one, and say "Just this
"Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
"Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping, and I chuse

Her Never to stoop. Oh, Sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands:

Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands

As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We'll meet The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your Master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, Sir! Notice Neptune, tho',
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me.

COUNT GISMOND

AIX IN PROVENCE

Christ God, who savest men, save most
Of men Count Gismond who saved me!
Count Gauthier, when he chose his post,
Chose time and place and company
To suit it; when he struck at length
My honor 'twas with all his strength.

п

And doubtlessly ere he could draw
All points to one, he must have schemed!
That miserable morning saw
Few half so happy as I seemed,
While being dressed in Queen's array
To give our Tourney prize away.

Gauthier's scheme

111

I thought they loved me, did me grace
To please themselves; 'twas all their deed;
God makes, or fair or foul, our face;
If showing mine so caused to bleed
My cousins' hearts, they should have dropped
A word, and straight the play had stopped.

ıv

They, too, so beauteous! Each a queen By virtue of her brow and breast; Not needing to be crowned, I mean, As I do. E'en when I was dressed, Had either of them spoke, instead Of glancing sideways with still head!

v

But no: they let me laugh, and sing
My birthday song quite through, adjust
The last rose in my garland, fling
A last look on the mirror, trust
My arms to each an arm of theirs,
And so descend the castle-stairs—

٧ı

TreacherOus
cousins

Of merry friends who kissed my cheek,
And called me Queen, and made me stoop
Under the canopy—(a streak
That pierced it, of the outside sun,
Powdered with gold its gloom's soft dun)—

VII

And they could let me take my state
And foolish throne amid applause
Of all come there to celebrate
My Queen's day—Oh, I think the cause
Of much was, they forgot no crowd
Makes up for parents in their shroud!

VIII

Howe'er that be, all eyes were bent
Upon me, when my cousins cast
Theirs down; 'twas time I should present
The victor's crown, but . . there, 'twill last
No long time . . . the old mist again
Blinds me as then it did. How vain!

IX

See! Gismond's at the gate, in talk
With his two boys: I can proceed.
Well, at that moment, who should stalk
Forth boldly (to my face, indeed)
But Gauthier, and he thundered "Stay!"
And all stayed. "Bring no crowns, I say!"

"Bring torches! Wind the penance-sheet "About her! Let her shun the chaste, "Or lay herself before their feet!

"Shall she, whose body I embraced

"A night long, queen it in the day?

"For Honor's sake no crowns, I say!"

XI

I? What I answered? As I live, I never fancied such a thing As answer possible to give.

What says the body when they spring Some monstrous torture-engine's whole Strength on it? No more says the soul.

XII

Till out strode Gismond; then I knew That I was saved. I never met His face before, but, at first view, I felt quite sure that God had set Himself to Satan; who would spend A minute's mistrust on the end?

XIII

He strode to Gauthier, in his throat Gave him the lie, then struck his mouth With one back-handed blow that wrote In blood men's verdict there. North, South, East, West, I looked. The lie was dead, And damned, and truth stood up instead.

XIV

Gauthier's This glads me most, that I enjoyed The heart of the joy, with my content In watching Gismond unalloyed By any doubt of the event: God took that on him-I was bid Watch Gismond for my part: I did.

χv

Did I not watch him while he let His armourer just brace his greaves, Rivet his hauberk, on the fret The while! His foot . . my memory leaves No least stamp out, nor how anon He pulled his ringing gauntlets on.

XVI

And e'en before the trumpet's sound Was finished, prone lay the false Knight, Prone as his lie, upon the ground: Gismond flew at him, used no sleight Of the sword, but open-breasted drove, Cleaving till out the truth he clove.

XVII

Which done, he dragged him to my feet And said "Here die, but end thy breath "In full confession, lest thou fleet "From my first, to God's second death! "Say, hast thou lied?" And, "I have lied "To God and her," he said, and died.

XVIII

Then Gismond, kneeling to me, asked

—What safe my heart holds, tho' no word

Could I repeat now, if I tasked

My powers for ever, to a third

Dear even as you are. Pass the rest

Until I sank upon his breast.

Gismond's

XIX

Over my head his arm he flung
Against the world; and scarce I felt
His sword, that dripped by me and swung,
A little shifted in its belt,—
For he began to say the while
How South our home lay many a mile.

$\mathbf{x}\mathbf{x}$

So 'mid the shouting multitude
We two walked forth to never more
Return. My cousins have pursued
Their life, untroubled as before
I vexed them. Gauthier's dwelling-place
God lighten! May his soul find grace!

XXI

Our elder boy has got the clear Great brow; tho' when his brother's black Full eye shows scorn, it . . . Gismond here? And have you brought my tercel back? I just was telling Adela How many birds it struck since May.

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP

T

Ratisbon stormed

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:
A mile or so away
On a little mound, Napoleon
Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust, you fancy how,
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone brow
Oppressive with its mind.

п

Just as perhaps he mused "My plans
"That soar to earth may fall,
"Let once my army-leader Lannes
"Waver at yonder wall,"—
Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
A rider, bound on bound
Full-galloping; nor bridle drew
Until he reached the mound.

ш.

Then off there flung in smiling joy,
And held himself erect
By just his horse's mane, a boy:
You hardly could suspect—
(So tight he kept his lips compressed,
Scarce any blood came thro')
You looked twice ere you saw his breast
Was all but shot in two.

ı٧

"Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace "We've got you Ratisbon!

A soldie boy's

"The Marshal's in the market-place,

"And you'll be there anon

"To see your flag-bird flap his vans

"Where I, to heart's desire,

"Perched him!" The Chief's eye flashed; his plans

Soared up again like fire.

V

The Chief's eye flashed; but presently Softened itself, as sheathes

A film the mother eagle's eye
When her bruised eaglet breathes:

"You're wounded!" "Nay," his soldier's pride Touched to the quick, he said:

"I'm killed, Sire!" And, his Chief beside, Smiling the boy fell dead.

SOLILOQUY OF THE SPANISH CLOISTER

GR-R-R—there go, my heart's abhorrence! Water your damned flower-pots, do! If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence, God's blood, would not mine kill you!

A murderous hate What? your myrtle-bush wants trimming? Oh, that rose has prior claims— Needs its leaden vase filled brimming? Hell dry you up with its flames!

п

At the meal we sit together:

Salve tibi! I must hear

Wise talk of the kind of weather,

Sort of season, time of year:

Not a plenteous cork-crop: scarcely

Dare we hope oak-galls, I doubt:

What's the Latin name for "parsley"?

What's the Greek name for Swine's Snout?

ш

Whew! We'll have our platter burnished,
Laid with care on our own shelf!
With a fire-new spoon we're furnished,
And a goblet for ourself,
Rinsed like something sacrificial
Ere 'tis fit to touch our chaps—
Marked with L. for our initial!
(He, he! There his lily snaps!)

IV

Saint, forsooth! While brown Dolores Squats outside the Convent bank, With Sanchicha, telling stories, Steeping tresses in the tank, Blue-black, lustrous, thick like horsehairs,
—Can't I see his dead eye glow
Bright, as 'twere a Barbary corsair's?

(That is, if he'd let it show!)

Accusa-

v

When he finishes refection,
Knife and fork he never lays
Cross-wise, to my recollection,
As do I, in Jesu's praise.
I, the Trinity illustrate,
Drinking watered orange-pulp—
In three sips the Arian frustrate;
While he drains his at one gulp!

VI

Oh, those melons! If he's able
We're to have a feast; so nice!
One goes to the Abbot's table,
All of us get each a slice.
How go on your flowers? None double?
Not one fruit-sort can you spy?
Strange!—And I, too, at such trouble,
Keep'em close-nipped on the sly!

VII

There's a great text in Galatians, Once you trip on it, entails Twenty-nine distinct damnations, One sure, if another fails.

Plots If I trip him just a-dying,
Sure of Heaven as sure can be,
Spin him round and send him flying
Off to Hell, a Manichee?

VIII

Or, my scrofulous French novel,
On grey paper with blunt type!
Simply glance at it, you grovel
Hand and foot in Belial's gripe:
If I double down its pages
At the woeful sixteenth print,
When he gathers his greengages,
Ope a sieve and slip it in't?

ΙX

Or, there 's Satan!—one might venture Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave Such a flaw in the indenture

As he'd miss till, past retrieve,
Blasted lay that rose-acacia

We're so proud of! Hy, Zy, Hine...
'St, there's Vespers! Plena gratia

Ave, Virgo! Gr-r--you swine!

IN A GONDOLA

He sings.

I seen my heart up to thee, all my heart In this my singing!

10

For the stars help me, and the sea bears part;
The very night is clinging
Closer to Venice streets to leave one space
Above me, whence thy face
May light my joyous heart to thee its dwelling-place.

A dangerous intrigue

She speaks.

Say after me, and try to say My very words, as if each word Came from you of your own accord, In your own voice, in your own way: "This woman's heart, and soul, and brain "Are mine as much as this gold chain "She bids me wear; which" (say again) "I choose to make by cherishing "A precious thing, or choose to fling "Over the boat-side, ring by ring." And yet once more say . . . no word more! Since words are only words. Give o'er! Unless you call me, all the same, Familiarly by my pet-name Which, if the Three should hear you call, And me reply to, would proclaim At once our secret to them all: Ask of me, too, command me, blame-Do break down the partition-wall 'Twixt us, the daylight world beholds Curtained in dusk and splendid folds. What's left but—all of me to take? I am the Three's; prevent them, slake Your thirst! 'Tis said, the Arab sage In practising with gems can loose

Grey
Zanobi's
purchased
bride

Their subtle spirit in his cruce And leave but ashes: so, sweet mage, Leave them my ashes when thy use Sucks out my soul, thy heritage!

He sings.

r

Past we glide, and past, and past!
What's that poor Agnese doing
Where they make the shutters fast!
Grey Zanobi's just a-wooing
To his couch the purchased bride:
Past we glide!

. 2

Past we glide, and past, and past!
Why's the Pucci Palace flaring
Like a beacon to the blast?
Guests by hundreds—not one caring
If the dear host's neck were wried:
Past we glide!

She sings.

.

The Moth's kiss, first!
Kiss me as if you made believe
You were not sure, this eve,
How my face, your flower, had pursed
Its petals up; so, here and there

You brush it, till I grow aware Who wants me, and wide open burst.

Moth's kiss and bee's kiss

2

The Bee's kiss, now!
Kiss me as if you entered gay
My heart at some noonday,
A bud that dares not disallow
The claim, so all is rendered up,
And passively its shattered cup
Over your head to sleep I bow.

60

He sings.

Ι

What are we two?
I am a Jew,
And carry thee, farther than friends can pursue,
To a feast of our tribe,
Where they need thee to bribe
The devil that blasts them unless he imbibe
Thy... Shatter the vision for ever! And now,
As of old, I am I, Thou art Thou!

2

Say again, what we are? The sprite of a star,
I lure thee above where the Destinies bar
My plumes their full play
Till a ruddier ray
Than my pale one announce there is withering away
Some... Shatter the vision for ever! And now,
As of old, I am I, Thou art Thou!

He muses.

A lover's Oh, which were best, to roam or rest?

The land's lap or the water's breast?

To sleep on yellow millet-sheaves,
Or swim in lucid shallows, just
Eluding water-lily leaves,
An inch from Death's black fingers, thrust
To lock you, whom release he must;
Which life were best on Summer eves?

He speaks, musing.

Lie back; could thought of mine improve you? From this shoulder let there spring A wing; from this, another wing; Wings, not legs and feet, shall move you! Snow-white must they spring, to blend With your flesh, but I intend They shall deepen to the end, Broader, into burning gold, Till both wings crescent-wise enfold Your perfect self, from 'neath your feet To o'er your head, where, lo, they meet As if a million sword-blades hurled Defiance from you to the world!

Rescue me thou, the only real!
And scare away this mad Ideal
That came, nor motions to depart!
Thanks! Now, stay ever as thou art!

100

Still be muses.

T

What if the Three should catch at last Thy serenader? While there's cast Paul's cloak about my head, and fast Gian pinions me, Himself has past His stylet thro' my back; I reel; And . . . is it Thou I feel?

Lovers musings

2

They trail me, these three godless knaves,
Past every church that sains and saves,
Nor stop till, where the cold sea raves
By Lido's wet accursed graves,
They scoop mine, roll me to its brink,
And . . . on Thy breast I sink!

110

She replies, musing.

Dip your arm o'er the boat-side, elbow-deep,
As I do: thus: were Death so unlike Sleep,
Caught this way? Death's to fear from flame, or
steel,
Or poison doubtless; but from water—feel!

Go find the bottom! Would you stay me? There!

120

Now pluck a great blade of that ribbon-grass To plait in where the foolish jewel was, I flung away: since you have praised my hair, "Tis proper to be choice in what I wear.

He speaks.

130

140

150

Row home? must we row home? Too surely The first meeting re- Know I where its front's demurely Over the Giudecca piled; Window just with window mating, Door on door exactly waiting, All's the set face of a child: But behind it, where's a trace Of the staidness and reserve. And formal lines without a curve, In the same child's playing-face? No two windows look one way O'er the small sea-water thread Below them. Ah, the autumn day I, passing, saw you overhead! First, out a cloud of curtain blew. Then, a sweet cry, and last, came you-To catch your loory that must needs Escape just then, of all times then, To peck a tall plant's fleecy seeds, And make me happiest of men. I scarce could breathe to see you reach So far back o'er the balcony, (To catch him ere he climbed too high Above you in the Smyrna peach) That quick the round smooth cord of gold, This coiled hair on your head, unrolled, Fell down you like a gorgeous snake The Roman girls were wont, of old,

When Rome there was, for coolness' sake To let lie curling o'er their bosoms.

Dear loory, may his beak retain

Ever its delicate rose stain

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160

As if the wounded lotus-blossoms Had marked their thief to know again!

Her chamber imagined

Stay longer yet, for others' sake Than mine! what should your chamber do? -With all its rarities that ache In silence while day lasts, but wake At night-time and their life renew, Suspended just to pleasure you -That brought against their will together These objects, and, while day lasts, weave Around them such a magic tether That they look dumb: your harp, believe, With all the sensitive tight strings That dare not speak, now to itself Breathes slumbrously as if some elf Went in and out the chords, his wings Make murmur wheresoe'er they graze, As an angel may, between the maze Of midnight palace-pillars, on And on, to sow God's plagues have gone Through guilty glorious Babylon. And while such murmurs flow, the nymph Bends o'er the harp-top from her shell, As the dry limpet for the lymph Come with a tune he knows so well. And how your statues' hearts must swell! And how your pictures must descend To see each other, friend with friend! Oh, could you take them by surprise, You'd find Schidone's eager Duke Doing the quaintest courtesies To that prim Saint by Haste-thee-Luke: And, deeper into her rock den,

170

190

Arrangements for he morrow Bold Castelfranco's Magdalen You'd find retreated from the ken Of that robed counsel-keeping Ser—As if the Tizian thinks of her, And is not, rather, gravely bent On seeing for himself what toys Are these, his progeny invent, What litter now the board employs Whereon he signed a document That got him murdered! Each enjoys Its night so well, you cannot break The sport up, so, indeed must make More stay with me, for others' sake.

She speaks.

T

To-morrow, if a harp-string, say, Is used to tie the jasmine back That overfloods my room with sweets, Contrive your Zorzi somehow meets My Zanze: if the ribbon's black, The Three are watching; keep away.

2

Your gondola—let Zorzi wreathe
A mesh of water-weeds about
Its prow, as if he unaware
Had struck some quay or bridge-foot stair;
That I may throw a paper out
As you and he go underneath.

There's Zanze's vigilant taper; safe are we!
Only one minute more to-night with me?
Resume your past self of a month ago!
Be you the bashful gallant, I will be
The lady with the colder breast than snow:
Now bow you, as becomes, nor touch my hand 220
More than I touch yours when I step to land,
And say, All thanks, Siora!—

The tragic end

Heart to heart, And lips to lips! Yet once more, ere we part, Clasp me, and make me thine, as mine thou art!

He is surprised, and stabbed.

It was ordained to be so, Sweet,—and best
Comes now, beneath thine eyes, and on thy breast.
Still kiss me! Care not for the cowards! Care
Only to put aside thy beauteous hair
My blood will hurt! The Three, I do not scorn
To death, because they never lived: but I 230
Have lived indeed, and so—(yet one more kiss)—
can die!

ARTEMIS PROLOGUIZES

I AM a Goddess of the ambrosial courts, And save by Here, Queen of Pride, surpassed By none whose temples whiten this the world. Thro' Heaven I roll my lucid moon along; I shed in Hell o'er my pale people peace; On Earth, I, caring for the creatures, guard

10

40

Phædra's passion for Hippolytus

Each pregnant yellow wolf and fox-bitch sleek, And every feathered mother's callow brood, And all that love green haunts and loneliness. Of men, the chaste adore me, hanging crowns Of poppies red to blackness, bell and stem, Upon my image at Athenai here; And this dead Youth, Asclepios bends above, Was dearest to me. He my buskined step To follow thro' the wild-wood leafy ways, And chase the panting stag, or swift with darts Stop the swift ounce, or lay the leopard low, Neglected homage to another God: Whence Aphrodite, by no midnight smoke Of tapers lulled, in jealousy despatched A noisome lust that, as the gadbee stings, Possessed his stepdame Phaidra for himself The son of Theseus her great absent spouse. Hippolutos exclaiming in his rage Against the miserable Queen, she judged Life insupportable, and, pricked at heart An Amazonian stranger's race should dare To scorn her, perished by the murderous cord: Yet, ere she perished, blasted in a scroll The fame of him her swerving made not swerve, 30 Which Theseus read, returning, and believed, So, exiled in the blindness of his wrath, The man without a crime, who, last as first, Loyal, divulged not to his sire the truth. Now Theseus from Poseidon had obtained That of his wishes should be granted Three, And this he imprecated straight—alive May ne'er Hippolutos reach other lands! Poseidon heard, ai ai! And scarce the prince Had stepped into the fixed boots of the car,

Hippo-

That give the feet a stay against the strength Of the Henetian horses, and around His body flung the reins, and urged their speed Along the rocks and shingles of the shore, When from the gaping wave a monster flung His obscene body in the coursers' path! These, mad with terror as the sea-bull sprawled Wallowing about their feet, lost care of him That reared them; and the master-chariot-pole Snapping beneath their plunges like a reed, Hippolutos, whose feet were trammeled fast, Was yet dragged forward by the circling rein Which either hand directed; nor was quenched The frenzy of that flight before each trace, Wheel-spoke and splinter of the woeful car, Each boulder-stone, sharp stub, and spiny shell, Huge fish-bone wrecked and wreathed amid the

sands On that detested beach, was bright with blood

And morsels of his flesh: then fell the steeds Head-foremost, crashing in their mooned fronts, 60 Shivering with sweat, each white eye horror-fixed. His people, who had witnessed all afar, Bore back the ruins of Hippolutos. But when his sire, too swoln with pride, rejoiced, (Indomitable as a man foredoomed) That vast Poseidon had fulfilled his prayer, I, in a flood of glory visible, Stood o'er my dying votary, and deed By deed revealed, as all took place, the truth. Then Theseus lay the woefullest of men, 70 And worthily; but ere the death-veils hid His face, the murdered prince full pardon breathed To his rash sire. Whereat Athenai wails.

of Æsculapius

The work So I, who ne'er forsake my votaries, Lest in the cross-way none the honey-cake Should tender, nor pour out the dog's hot life; Lest at my fane the priests disconsolate Should dress my image with some faded poor Few crowns, made favours of, nor dare object Such slackness to my worshippers who turn The trusting heart and loaded hand elsewhere. As they had climbed Olumpos to report Of Artemis and nowhere found her throne-I interposed: and, this eventful night, While round the funeral pyre the populace Stood with fierce light on their black robes that blind

Each sobbing head, while yet their hair they

O'er the dead body of their withered prince, And, in his palace, Theseus prostrated On the cold hearth, his brow cold as the slab 'Twas bruised on, groaned away the heavy grief-As the pyre fell, and down the cross logs crashed, Sending a crowd of sparkles thro' the night, And the gay fire, elate with mastery, Towered like a serpent o'er the clotted jars Of wine, dissolving oils and frankincense, And splendid gums, like gold, -my potency Conveyed the perished man to my retreat In the thrice venerable forest here. And this white-bearded Sage who squeezes now The berried plant, is Phoibos' son of fame. IOI Asclepios, whom my radiant brother taught The doctrine of each herb and flower and root. To know their secret'st virtue and express The saving soul of all—who so has soothed

With lavers the torn brow and murdered cheeks, Composed the hair and brought its gloss again, And called the red bloom to the pale skin back, And laid the strips and jagged ends of flesh Even once more, and slacked the sinew's knot rro Of every tortured limb—that now he lies As if mere sleep possessed him underneath These interwoven oaks and pines. Oh, cheer, Divine presenter of the healing rod Thy snake, with ardent throat and lulling eye, Twines his lithe spires around! I say, much cheer!

and the
woodnymphs
"Waring"
leaves
London

Proceed thou with thy wisest pharmacies!
And ye, white crowd of woodland sister-nymphs,
Ply, as the Sage directs, these buds and leaves
That strew the turf around the Twain! While I
Await, in fitting silence, the event.

WARING

[A POEM ABOUT ALFRED DOMETT]

Ι

I

What's become of Waring
Since he gave us all the slip,
Chose land-travel or seafaring,
Boots and chest, or staff and scrip,
Rather than pace up and down
Any longer London-town?

П

10

His pride Who'd have guessed it from his lip,
Or his brow's accustomed bearing,
On the night he thus took ship,
Or started landward?—little caring
For us, it seems, who supped together,
(Friends of his too, I remember)
And walked home thro' the merry weather,
The snowiest in all December;
I left his arm that night myself
For what's-his-name's, the new prose-poet,
That wrote the book there, on the shelf—
How, forsooth, was I to know it
If Waring meant to glide away
Like a ghost at break of day?
Never looked he half so gay!

ш

He was prouder than the Devil:
How he must have cursed our revel!
Ay, and many other meetings,
Indoor visits, outdoor greetings,
As up and down he paced this London,
With no work done, but great works undone,
Where scarce twenty knew his name.
Why not, then, have earlier spoken,
Written, bustled? Who's to blame
If your silence kept unbroken?
"True, but there were sundry jottings,
"Stray-leaves, fragments, blurrs and blottings,
"Certain first steps were achieved
"Already which'"—(is that your meaning?)

40

"Had well borne out whoe'er believed
"In more to come!" But who goes gleaning
Hedge-side chance-blades, while full-sheaved
Stand cornfields by him? Pride, o'erweening
Pride alone, puts forth such claims
O'er the day's distinguished names.

The poet's love for him

IV

Meantime, how much I loved him, I find out now I've lost him: I, who cared not if I moved him, Who could so carelessly accost him, Henceforth never shall get free Of his ghostly company, His eyes that just a little wink As deep I go into the merit Of this and that distinguished spirit-His cheeks' raised colour, soon to sink, As long I dwell on some stupendous And tremendous (Heaven defend us!) Monstr'-inform'-ingens-horrend-ous Demoniaco-seraphic Penman's latest piece of graphic. Nay, my very wrist grows warm With his dragging weight of arm! E'en so, swimmingly appears, Thro' one's after-supper musings, Some lost Lady of old years, With her beauteous vain endeavour. And goodness unrepaid as ever; The face, accustomed to refusings, We, puppies that we were . . . Oh never

50

Cu.

Surely, nice of conscience, scrupled regrets Being aught like false, forsooth, to? Telling aught but honest truth to? What a sin, had we centupled Its possessor's grace and sweetness! No! she heard in its completeness Truth, for truth's a weighty matter, And, truth at issue, we can't flatter! Well, 'tis done with: she's exempt From damning us thro' such a sally; And so she glides, as down a valley, Taking up with her contempt, Past our reach; and in, the flowers Shut her unregarded hours.

> Oh, could I have him back once more, This Waring, but one half-day more! Back, with the quiet face of yore, So hungry for acknowledgment Like mine! I'd fool him to his bent! Feed, should not he, to heart's content? I'd say, "to only have conceived "Your great works, tho' they ne'er make progress, "Surpasses all we've yet achieved!" I'd lie so, I should be believed. I'd make such havoc of the claims Of the day's distinguished names To feast him with, as feasts an ogress Her sharp-toothed golden-crowned child! Or, as one feasts a creature rarely Captured here, unreconciled To capture; and completely gives

Its pettish humours licence, barely Requiring that it lives.

Where is he?

Ichabod, Ichabod, The glory is departed! Travels Waring East away? Who, of knowledge, by hearsay, Reports a man upstarted Somewhere as a God Hordes grown European-hearted, Millions of the wild made tame On a sudden at his fame? In Vishnu-land what Avatar? Or who, in Moscow, toward the Czar, With the demurest of footfalls Over the Kremlin's pavement, bright With serpentine and syenite, Steps, with five other Generals, That simultaneously take snuff, For each to have pretext enough To kerchiefwise unfurl his sash Which, softness' self, is yet the stuff To hold fast where a steel chain snaps, And leave the grand white neck no gash? Waring, in Moscow, to those rough Cold northern natures borne, perhaps, Like the lambwhite maiden dear From the circle of mute kings, Unable to repress the tear, Each as his sceptre down he flings, To Dian's fane at Taurica. Where now a captive priestess, she alway

100

110

Spain, or disguised

In Russia, Mingles her tender grave Hellenic speech With theirs, tuned to the hailstone-beaten beach, in London? As pours some pigeon, from the myrrhy lands 130 Rapt by the whirlblast to fierce Scythian strands Where breed the swallows, her melodious cry Amid their barbarous twitter!

In Russia? Never! Spain were fitter! Ay, most likely 'tis in Spain That we and Waring meet again-Now, while he turns down that cool narrow lane Into the blackness, out of grave Madrid All fire and shine—abrupt as when there's slid Its stiff gold blazing pall From some black coffin-lid. Or, best of all, I love to think The leaving us was just a feint; Back here to London did he slink: And now works on without a wink Of sleep, and we are on the brink Of something great in fresco paint: Some garret's ceiling, walls and floor, Up and down and o'er and o'er He splashes, as none splashed before Since great Caldara Polidore: Or Music means this land of ours Some favor yet, to pity won By Purcell from his Rosy Bowers,-"Give me my so long promised son, "Let Waring end what I begun!" Then down he creeps and out he steals Only when the night conceals

His face-in Kent 'tis cherry-time,

Or, hops are picking; for, at prime

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190

Of March, he wanders as, too happy, Years ago when he was young, Some mild eve when woods grew sappy, And the early moths had sprung To life from many a trembling sheath Woven the warm boughs beneath; While small birds said to themselves What should soon be actual song, And young gnats, by tens and twelves, Made as if they were the throng That crowd around and carry aloft The sound they have nursed, so sweet and pure, Out of a myriad noises soft, Into a tone that can endure Amid the noise of a July noon, When all God's creatures crave their boon, All at once and all in tune, And get it, happy as Waring then, Having first within his ken What a man might do with men, And far too glad, in the even-glow, To mix with your world he meant to take Into his hand, he told you, so-And out of it his world to make, To contract and to expand As he shut or oped his hand. Oh, Waring, what 's to really be? A clear stage and a crowd to see! Some Garrick—say—out shall not he The heart of Hamlet's mystery pluck? Or, where most unclean beasts are rife, Some Junius—am I right?—shall tuck His sleeve, and out with flaying-knife! Some Chatterton shall have the luck

A Garrick, a Junius, or a Chatterton?

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200

10

waring Of calling Rowley into life!
seen off
Triest
Some one shall somehow run amuck
With this old world for want of str

Some one shall somehow run amuck
With this old world, for want of strife
Sound asleep: contrive, contrive
To rouse us, Waring! Who's alive?
Our men scarce seem in earnest now:
Distinguished names!—but 'tis, somehow,
As if they played at being names
Still more distinguished, like the games
Of children. Turn our sport to earnest
With a visage of the sternest!
Bring the real times back, confessed
Still better than our very best!

п

"When I last saw Waring . . ."
(How all turned to him who spoke—You saw Waring? Truth or joke?
In land-travel, or sea-faring?)

11

"We were sailing by Triest,

"Where a day or two we harboured:

"A sunset was in the West,

"When, looking over the vessel's side,

"One of our company espied

"A sudden speck to larboard.

"And, as a sea-duck flies and swims

"At once, so came the light craft up,

"With its sole lateen sail that trims

"And turns (the water round its rims

"Dancing, as round a sinking cup) "And by us like a fish it curled, "And drew itself up close beside, "Its great sail on the instant furled, "And o'er its planks, a shrill voice cried, "(A neck as bronzed as a Lascar's) 20 "Buy wine of us, you English Brig? "" Or fruit, tobacco and cigars? ""A Pilot for you to Triest? "' Without one, look you ne'er so big, "'They'll never let you up the bay! "' We natives should know best.' "I turned, and 'just those fellows' way,' "Our captain said, 'The 'long-shore thieves "'Are laughing at us in their sleeves.' "In truth, the boy leaned laughing back; 30 "And one, half-hidden by his side "Under the furled sail, soon I spied, "With great grass hat, and kerchief black, "Who looked up, with his kingly throat, "Said somewhat, while the other shook "His hair back from his eyes to look "Their longest at us; then the boat, "I know not how, turned sharply round, "Laying her whole side on the sea "As a leaping fish does; from the lee "Into the weather, cut somehow "Her sparkling path beneath our bow; "And so went off, as with a bound,

"Into the rose and golden half "Of the sky, to overtake the sun,

50

Where next?
Mount and flower

"And reach the shore, like the sea-calf
"Its singing cave; yet I caught one
"Glance ere away the boat quite passed,
"And neither time nor toil could mar
"Those features: so I saw the last
"Of Waring!"—You? Oh, never star

Was lost here, but it rose afar!
Look East, where whole new thousands are!
In Vishnu-land what Avatar?

RUDEL TO THE LADY OF TRIPOLI

1

I know a Mount, the gracious Sun perceives First when he visits, last, too, when he leaves The world; and, vainly favored, it repays The day-long glory of his steadfast gaze By no change of its large calm front of snow. And underneath the Mount, a Flower I know, He cannot have perceived, that changes ever At his approach; and, in the lost endeavour To live his life, has parted, one by one, With all a flower's true graces, for the grace TO Of being but a foolish mimic sun, With ray-like florets round a disk-like face. Men nobly call by many a name the Mount, As over many a land of theirs its large Calm front of snow like a triumphal targe Is reared, and still with old names, fresh ones vie, Each to its proper praise and own account: Men call the Flower, the Sunflower, sportively.

H

Oh, Angel of the East, one, one gold look Across the waters to this twilight nook, —The far sad waters, Angel, to this nook! Rudel's sunflower

Ш

Dear Pilgrim, art thou for the East indeed? Go! Saying ever as thou dost proceed, That I, French Rudel, choose for my device A sunflower outspread like a sacrifice Before its idol. See! These inexpert And hurried fingers could not fail to hurt The woven picture; 'tis a woman's skill Indeed; but nothing baffled me, so, ill Or well, the work is finished. Say, men feed 30 On songs I sing, and therefore bask the bees On my flower's breast as on a platform broad: But, as the flower's concern is not for these But solely for the sun, so men applaud In vain this Rudel, he not looking here But to the East—the East! Go, say this, Pilgrim dear!

CRISTINA

I

She should never have looked at me,
If she meant I should not love her!
There are plenty..men, you call such,
I suppose..she may discover

How she All her soul to, if she pleases,

"fixed"
And yet leave much as she found them:
But I'm not so, and she knew it
When she fixed me, glancing round them.

71

What? To fix me thus meant nothing?
But I can't tell... there's my weakness..
What her look said!—no vile cant, sure,
About "need to strew the bleakness
"Of some lone shore with its pearl-seed,
"That the Sea feels"—no "strange yearning
"That such souls have, most to lavish
"Where there's chance of least returning."

ш

Oh, we're sunk enough here, God knows!
But not quite so sunk that moments,
Sure tho' seldom, are denied us,
When the spirit's true endowments
Stand out plainly from its false ones,
And apprise it if pursuing
Or the right way or the wrong way,
To its triumph or undoing.

IV

There are flashes struck from midnights, There are fire-flames noondays kindle, Whereby piled-up honors perish, Whereby swoln ambitions dwindle, While just this or that poor impulse, Which for once had play unstifled, Seems the sole work of a life-time That away the rest have trifled.

The mingling of souls

v

Doubt you if, in some such moment,
As she fixed me, she felt clearly,
Ages past the soul existed,
Here an age 'tis resting merely,
And hence, fleets again for ages:
While the true end, sole and single,
It stops here for is, this love-way,
With some other soul to mingle?

og

VI

Else it loses what it lived for,
And eternally must lose it;
Better ends may be in prospect,
Deeper blisses, if you choose it,
But this life's end and this love-bliss
Have been lost here. Doubt you whether
This she felt, as, looking at me,
Mine and her souls rushed together?

VII

Oh, observe! Of course, next moment, The world's honors, in derision, Trampled out the light for ever: Never fear but there's provision

God's secret Johannes Agricola Of the Devil's to quench knowledge

Lest we walk the earth in rapture!

—Making those who catch God's secret

Just so much more prize their capture.

VIII

Such am I: the secret's mine now!

She has lost me—I have gained her!

Her soul's mine: and, thus, grown perfect,

I shall pass my life's remainder,

Life will just hold out the proving

Both our powers, alone and blended—

And then, come the next life quickly!

This world's use will have been ended.

I.—MADHOUSE CELL

JOHANNES AGRICOLA IN MEDITATION

THERE'S Heaven above, and night by night,
I look right through its gorgeous roof;
No suns and moons though e'er so bright
Avail to stop me; splendor-proof
I keep the broods of stars aloof:
For I intend to get to God,
For 'tis to God I speed so fast,
For in God's breast, my own abode,
Those shoals of dazzling glory past,
I lay my spirit down at last.
I lie where I have always lain,
God smiles as he has always smiled;

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30

Ere suns and moons could wax and wane, Ere stars were thundergirt, or piled The Heavens, God thought on me his child; Ordained a life for me, arrayed

Predestined to bliss

Its circumstances, every one To the minutest; ay, God said

This head this hand should rest upon Thus, ere he fashioned star or sun.

And having thus created me,

Thus rooted me, he bade me grow,

Guiltless for ever, like a tree

That buds and blooms, nor seeks to know

The law by which it prospers so:

But sure that thought and word and deed

All go to swell his love for me,

Me, made because that love had need

Of something irrevocably Pledged solely its content to be.

Yes, ves, a tree which must ascend,—

No poison-gourd foredoomed to stoop!

I have God's warrant, could I blend

All hideous sins, as in a cup,

To drink the mingled venoms up, Secure my nature will convert

The draught to blossoming gladness fast,

While sweet dews turn to the gourd's hurt, And bloat, and while they bloat it, blast,

As from the first its lot was cast. For as I lie, smiled on, full fed

By unexhausted power to bless,

I gaze below on Hell's fierce bed,

And those its waves of flame oppress, Swarming in ghastly wretchedness;

Some predestined to damnation Whose life on earth aspired to be
One altar-smoke, so pure!—to win
If not love like God's love to me,
At least to keep his anger in,
And all their striving turned to sin!
Priest, doctor, hermit, monk grown white
With prayer, the broken-hearted nun,
The martyr, the wan acolyte,
The incense-swinging child,—undone
Before God fashioned star or sun!
God, whom I praise; how could I praise,
If such as I might understand,
Make out, and reckon on, his ways,
And bargain for his love, and stand,
Paying a price, at his right hand?

II.-MADHOUSE CELL

60

TO

PORPHYRIA'S LOVER

The rain set early in to-night,
The sullen wind was soon awake,
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
And did its worst to vex the lake,
I listened with heart fit to break;
When glided in Porphyria: straight
She shut the cold out and the storm,
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;
Which done, she rose, and from her form
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,
And laid her soiled gloves by, untied

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Her hat and let the damp hair fall, And, last, she sate down by my side And called me. When no voice replied, She put my arm about her waist,

And made her smooth white shoulder bare, And all her yellow hair displaced,

And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,

And spread o'er all her yellow hair, Murmuring how she loved me; she

Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,

To set its struggling passion free

From pride, and vainer ties dissever, And give herself to me for ever: But passion sometimes would prevail,

Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain A sudden thought of one so pale

For love of her, and all in vain; So, she was come through wind and rain.

Be sure I looked up at her eyes Proud, very proud; at last I knew

Porphyria worshipped me; surprise Made my heart swell, and still it grew

While I debated what to do. That moment she was mine, mine, fair,

Perfectly pure and good: I found

A thing to do, and all her hair In one long yellow string I wound Three times her little throat around, And strangled her. No pain felt she;

I am quite sure she felt no pain. As a shut bud that holds a bee

I warily oped her lids; again Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.

The maniac and his dead victim

And I untightened next the tress
About her neck; her cheek once more
Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:
I propped her head up as before,
Only, this time my shoulder bore
Her head, which droops upon it still:
The smiling rosy little head,
So glad it has its utmost will,
That all it scorned at once is fled,
And I, its love, am gained instead!
Porphyria's love: she guessed not how
Her darling one wish would be heard.
And thus we sit together now,
And all night long we have not stirred,

And yet God has not said a word!

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THROUGH THE METIDJA TO ABD-EL-KADR

1842

As I ride, as I ride,
With a full heart for my guide,
So its tide rocks my side,
As I ride, as I ride,
That, as I were double-eyed,
He, in whom our Tribes confide,
Is descried, ways untried
As I ride, as I ride.

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As I ride, as I ride
To our Chief and his Allied,
Who dares chide my heart's pride
As I ride, as I ride?
Or are witnesses denied—
Through the desert waste and wide
Do I glide unespied
As I ride, as I ride?

A gailop through the desert

Ш

As I ride, as I ride,
When an inner voice has cried,
The sands slide, nor abide
(As I ride, as I ride)
O'er each visioned Homicide
That came vaunting (has he lied?)
To reside—where he died,
As I ride, as I ride.

I٧

As I ride, as I ride,
Ne'er has spur my swift horse plied,
Yet his hide, streaked and pied,
As I ride, as I ride,
Shows where sweat has sprung and dried,
—Zebra-footed, ostrich-thighed—
How has vied stride with stride
As I ride, as I ride!

Prophet and his Bride

A pleasant spot

As I ride, as I ride,
Could I loose what Fate has tied,
Ere I pried, she should hide
As I ride, as I ride,
All that's meant me: satisfied
When the Prophet and the Bride
Stop veins I'd have subside
As I ride, as I ride!

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN:

A CHILD'S STORY

(WRITTEN FOR, AND INSCRIBED TO, W. M. THE YOUNGER)

I

Hamelin Town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its wall on the southern side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity.

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11

Rats!
They fought the dogs, and

In fifty different sharps and flats.

Rats!

They fought the dogs, and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cook's own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats,
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking

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At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking:
"'Tis clear," cried they, "our Mayor's a noddy;
"And as for our Corporation—shocking
"To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
"For dolts that can't or won't determine
"What's best to rid us of our vermin!
"You hope, because you're old and obese,
"To find in the furry civic robe ease?
"Rouse up, Sirs! Give your brains a racking 30
"To find the remedy we're lacking,
"Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"
At this the Mayor and Corporation

IV

An hour they sate in council, At length the Mayor broke silence:

Quaked with a mighty consternation.

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Piper

Corpora- "For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell; tion and "I wish I were a mile hence! "It's easy to bid one rack one's brain-"I'm sure my poor head aches again "I've scratched it so, and all in vain. "Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!" Just as he said this, what should hap At the chamber door but a gentle tap? "Bless us," cried the Mayor, "what's that?" (With the Corporation as he sat, Looking little though wondrous fat; Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister Than a too-long-opened oyster, Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous For a plate of turtle green and glutinous) "Only a scraping of shoes on the mat? "Anything like the sound of a rat "Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"

"Come in!"-the Mayor cried, looking bigger: And in did come the strangest figure! His queer long coat from heel to head Was half of yellow and half of red; And he himself was tall and thin, With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin, And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin, No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin, But lips where smiles went out and in-There was no guessing his kith and kin! And nobody could enough admire The tall man and his quaint attire: Quoth one: "It's as my great-grandsire.

"Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,
"Had walked this way from his painted tombstone!"

The Piper's record

٧ı

He advanced to the council-table: 70 And, "Please your honours," said he, "I'm able, "By means of a secret charm, to draw "All creatures living beneath the sun, "That creep, or swim, or fly, or run, "After me so as you never saw! "And I chiefly use my charm "On creatures that do people harm, "The mole, and toad, and newt, and viper; "And people call me the Pied Piper." (And here they noticed round his neck 80 A scarf of red and yellow stripe, To match with his coat of the self same cheque; And at the scarf's end hung a pipe; And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying As if impatient to be playing Upon this pipe, as low it dangled Over his vesture so old-fangled.) "Yet," said he, "poor piper as I am, "In Tartary I freed the Cham, "Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats; "I eased in Asia the Nizam "Of a monstrous broad of vampyre-bats: "And, as for what your brain bewilders, "If I can rid your town of rats "Will you give me a thousand guilders?" "One? fifty thousand!"—was the exclamation Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

VII

Into the street the Piper stept,

Smiling first a little smile, As if he knew what magic slept 100 In his quiet pipe the while; Then, like a musical adept, To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled, And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled Like a candle flame where salt is sprinkled; And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered, You heard as if an army muttered; And the muttering grew to a grumbling; And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling; And out of the houses the rats came tumbling. 170 Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats, Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats, Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,

Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins, Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,

Families by tens and dozens, Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives-Followed the Piper for their lives. From street to street he piped advancing, And step for step they followed dancing, 120 Until they came to the river Weser Wherein all plunged and perished -Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar, Swam across and lived to carry (As he the manuscript he cherished) To Rat-land home his commentary, Which was, "At the first shrill notes of the pipe "I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,

140

"And putting apples, wondrous ripe,

"Into a cider-press's gripe:

A rat's account 30 of it

"And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,

"And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,

"And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,

"And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks;

"And it seemed as if a voice

"(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery "Is breathed) called out, O rats, rejoice!

"The world is grown to one vast drysaltery!

"So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,

"Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!

"And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,

"All ready staved, like a great sun shone

"Glorious scarce an inch before me,

"Just as methought it said, Come, bore me!

"-I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

VIII

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple;
"Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles!
"Poke out the nests and block up the holes!
"Consult with carpenters and builders, r50
"And leave in our town not even a trace
"Of the rats!"—when suddenly up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a, "First, if you please, my thousand
guilders!"

IX

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue; So did the Corporation too.

For council dinners made rare havock With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock; disputed And half the money would replenish Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish. 160 To pay this sum to a wandering fellow With a gypsy coat of red and yellow! "Beside," quoth the Mayor with a quoth the Mayor with a knowing wink,

"Our business was done at the river's brink;

"We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,

"And what's dead can't come to life, I think.

"So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink

"From the duty of giving you something for drink,

"And a matter of money to put in your poke;

"But, as for the guilders, what we spoke "Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.

"Beside, our losses have made us thrifty;

"A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

x

The piper's face fell, and he cried, "No trifling! I can't wait, beside! "I've promised to visit by dinner time "Bagdat, and accept the prime "Of the Head Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,

" For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,

"Of a nest of scorpions no survivor-"With him I proved no bargain-driver,

"With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!

"And folks who put me in a passion

"May find me pipe to another fashion."

180

ΧI

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d' ye think I'll brook

The account settled

"Being worse treated than a Cook?

"Insulted by a lazy ribald

"With idle pipe and vesture piebald?

"Your threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,

"Blow your pipe there till you burst!"

190

XII

Once more he stept into the street;
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet

Soft notes as yet musician's cunning Never gave the enraptured air)

Never gave the enraptured air)
There was a rustling, that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping, and little tongues chattering,
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is
scattering,

Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

XIII

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood As if they were changed into blocks of wood,

flight

Unable to move a step, or cry 210 children's To the children merrily skipping by-And could only follow with the eye That joyous crowd at the Piper's back. But how the Mayor was on the rack, And the wretched Council's bosoms beat, As the Piper turned from the High Street To where the Weser rolled its waters Right in the way of their sons and daughters! However he turned from South to West. And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed, And after him the children pressed; Great was the joy in every breast. "He never can cross that mighty top! "He's forced to let the piping drop, "And we shall see our children stop!" When, lo, as they reached the mountain's side, A wondrous portal opened wide, As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed; And the Piper advanced and the children followed. And when all were in to the very last, 230 The door in the mountain side shut fast. Did I say, all? No! One was lame. And could not dance the whole of the way; And in after years, if you would blame His sadness, he was used to say,-"It's dull in our town since my playmates left! "I can't forget that I'm bereft "Of all the pleasant sights they see,

"Which the Piper also promised me;

"For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,

"Joining the town and just at hand,

"Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,

"And flowers put forth a fairer hue,

"And everything was strange and new; Alas for "The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here, Hamelin "And their dogs outran our fallow deer, "And honey-bees had lost their stings, "And horses were born with eagles' wings; "And just as I became assured

"My lame foot would be speedily cured, 250 "The music stopped and I stood still,

"And found myself outside the Hill,

"Left alone against my will, "To go now limping as before,

"And never hear of that country more!"

XIV

Alas, alas for Hamelin! There came into many a burgher's pate A text which says, that Heaven's Gate

Opes to the Rich at as easy rate As the needle's eye takes a camel in! 260 The Mayor sent East, West, North, and South To offer the Piper by word of mouth,

Wherever it was men's lot to find him. Silver and gold to his heart's content, If he'd only return the way he went,

And bring the children behind him. But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour, And Piper and dancers were gone for ever, They made a decree that lawyers never

Should think their records dated duly If, after the day of the month and year, These words did not as well appear, "And so long after what happened here

"On the Twenty-second of July,

280

290

Memorials "Thirteen hundred and Seventy-six:"
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the Children's last retreat,
They called it, the Pied Piper's Street—
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labour.

Nor suffered they Hostelry or Tavern
To shock with mirth a street so solemn;

But opposite the place of the cavern They wrote the story on a column, And on the Great Church Window painted The same, to make the world acquainted How their children were stolen away; And there it stands to this very day. And I must not omit to say That in Transylvania there's a tribe Of alien people that ascribe The outlandish ways and dress On which their neighbours lay such stress, To their fathers and mothers having risen Out of some subterraneous prison Into which they were trepanned Long time ago in a mighty band Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land, But how or why, they don't understand.

٧v

So, Willy, let you and me be wipers

Of scores out with all men—especially pipers:

And, whether they pipe us free, from rats or from mice,

If we've promised them such let us keep our

If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise.

"HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX"

[16--]

I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he; I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three; gallop off "Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew:

"Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through; Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest, And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

п

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place:

I turned in my saddle and made its girths tight, Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique right,

Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit, Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

Ш

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew

Lokeren, the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear:

At Boom, a great yellow star came out to see: Boom to At Duffeld, 'twas morning as plain as could be; And from Mecheln church-steeple we heard the half-chime.

So Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

At Aerschot, up leaped of a sudden the sun, And against him the cattle stood black every one, To stare thro' the mist at us galloping past, And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last, With resolute shoulders, each butting away The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray.

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back

For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;

And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance! And the thick heavy spume-flakes which are and anon

His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on.

VI

By Hasselt, Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay spur! "Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,

HOW THEY BROUGHT GOOD NEWS 101

"We'll remember at Aix"—for one heard the quick wheeze
Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering

i her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,

And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank, As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

VII

So we were left galloping, Joris and I, Past Looz and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky; The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh, 'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff;

Till over by Dalhem a dome-spire sprang white, And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

VIII

"How they'll greet us!"—and all in a moment his roan

Rolled neck and croup over, lay dead as a stone; And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate.

With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim, And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

ıx

Then I cast loose my buffcoat, each holster let fall, Shook off both my jack-boots, let go belt and all,

Roland with his called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without gallops in peer;

Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,

Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

x

And all I remember is, friends flocking round
As I sate with his head 'twixt my knees on the
ground,

And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine, As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine.

Which (the burgesses voted by common consent)
Was no more than his due who brought good news
from Ghent.

PICTOR IGNOTUS

[FLORENCE, 15-]

I could have painted pictures like that youth's
Ye praise so. How my soul springs up! No

Stayed me—ah, thought which saddens while it soothes!—

Never did fate forbid me, star by star, To outburst on your night with all my gift

Of fires from God: nor would my flesh have shrunk

A painter's

From seconding my soul, with eyes uplift And wide to Heaven, or, straight like thunder, sunk To the centre, of an instant; or around Turned calmly and inquisitive, to scan 10 The licence and the limit, space and bound, Allowed to Truth made visible in Man. And, like that youth ye praise so, all I saw, Over the canvas could my hand have flung, Each face obedient to its passion's law, Each passion clear proclaimed without a tongue; Whether Hope rose at once in all the blood, A-tiptoe for the blessing of embrace, Or Rapture drooped the eyes, as when her brood Pull down the nesting dove's heart to its place, Or Confidence lit swift the forehead up, And locked the mouth fast, like a castle braved.-O Human faces, hath it spilt, my cup? What did ye give me that I have not saved? Nor will I say I have not dreamed (how well!) Of going-I, in each new picture,-forth, As, making new hearts beat and bosoms swell, To Pope or Kaiser, East, West, South or North, Bound for the calmly satisfied great State, Or glad aspiring little burgh, it went, Flowers cast upon the car which bore the freight, Through old streets named afresh from its event, Till it reached home, where learned Age should greet My face, and Youth, the star not yet distinct

Above his hair, lie learning at my feet!—
Oh, thus to live, I and my picture, linked
With love about, and praise, till life should end,
And then not go to Heaven, but linger here,

His choice Here on my earth, earth's every man my friend,—
The thought grew frightful, 'twas so wildly
dear!

40
But a voice changed it! Glimpses of such sights

But a voice changed it! Glimpses of such sights

Have scared me, like the revels thro' a door

Of some strenge House of Idela at its rites.

Of some strange House of Idols at its rites;
This world seemed not the world it was before!

Mixed with my loving trusting ones there trooped
... Who summoned those cold faces that

begun

To press on me and judge me? Tho' I stooped Shrinking, as from the soldiery a nun,

They drew me forth, and spite of me . . enough! These buy and sell our pictures, take and give,

Count them for garniture and household-stuff, 50
And where they live our pictures needs must

live.

And see their faces, listen to their prate, Partakers of their daily pettiness,

Discussed of,—"This I love, or this I hate,
"This likes me more, and this affects me less!"

Wherefore I chose my portion. If at whiles
My heart sinks, as monotonous I paint

These endless cloisters and eternal aisles

With the same series, Virgin, Babe, and Saint,

With the same cold, calm, beautiful regard,
At least no merchant traffics in my heart;

The sanctuary's gloom at least shall ward

Vain tongues from where my pictures stand apart;

Only prayer breaks the silence of the shrine While, blackening in the daily candle-smoke, They moulder on the damp wall's travertine,

'Mid echoes the light footstep never woke.

THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND

So die, my pictures; surely, gently die!

" Die, my Oh, youth, men praise so, -holds their praise pictures!

105

its worth? Blown harshly, keeps the trump its golden cry? Tastes sweet the water with such specks of earth?

THE ITALIAN IN ENGLAND

THAT second time they hunted me From hill to plain, from shore to sea, And Austria, hounding far and wide Her blood-hounds thro' the country-side, Breathed hot and instant on my trace,-I made six days a hiding-place Of that dry green old aqueduct Where I and Charles, when boys, have plucked The fire-flies from the roof above, Bright creeping thro' the moss they love. -How long it seems since Charles was lost! Six days the soldiers crossed and crossed The country in my very sight; And when that peril ceased at night, The sky broke out in red dismay With signal-fires; well, there I lay Close covered o'er in my recess, Up to the neck in ferns and cress, Thinking on Metternich our friend, And Charles's miserable end, And much beside, two days; the third, Hunger o'ercame me when I heard

Help in hiding The peasants from the village go To work among the maize; you know, With us, in Lombardy, they bring Provisions packed on mules, a string With little bells that cheer their task. And casks, and boughs on every cask To keep the sun's heat from the wine; These I let pass in jingling line, And, close on them, dear noisy crew, The peasants from the village, too; For at the very rear would troop Their wives and sisters in a group To help, I knew; when these had passed, I threw my glove to strike the last. Taking the chance: she did not start, Much less cry out, but stooped apart One instant, rapidly glanced round, And saw me beckon from the ground: A wild bush grows and hides my crypt; She picked my glove up while she stripped A branch off, then rejoined the rest With that; my glove lay in her breast: Then I drew breath: they disappeared: It was for Italy I feared.

An hour, and she returned alone Exactly where my glove was thrown. Meanwhile came many thoughts; on me Rested the hopes of Italy; I had devised a certain tale Which, when 'twas told her, could not fail Persuade a peasant of its truth; I meant to call a freak of youth

50

This hiding, and give hopes of pay, And no temptation to betray. But when I saw that woman's face. Its calm simplicity of grace, Our Italy's own attitude In which she walked thus far, and stood, 60 Planting each naked foot so firm, To crush the snake and spare the worm-At first sight of her eyes, I said, "I am that man upon whose head "They fix the price, because I hate "The Austrians over us: the State "Will give you gold-oh, gold so much, "If you betray me to their clutch! "And be your death, for aught I know, "If once they find you saved their foe. "Now, you must bring me food and drink, "And also paper, pen, and ink, "And carry safe what I shall write "To Padua, which you'll reach at night "Before the Duomo shuts; go in, "And wait till Tenebræ begin; "Walk to the Third Confessional, "Between the pillar and the wall, "And kneeling whisper whence comes peace? "Say it a second time; then cease; 80 "And if the voice inside returns, " From Christ and Freedom; what concerns "The cause of Peace?- for answer, slip "My letter where you placed your lip; "Then come back happy we have done "Our mother service-I, the son,

"As you the daughter of our land?"

90

100

IIO

Three mornings more, she took her stand from Padua In the same place, with the same eyes: I was no surer of sun-rise Than of her coming: we conferred Of her own prospects, and I heard She had a lover-stout and tall, She said—then let her eyelids fall, "He could do much"—as if some doubt Entered her heart,—then, passing out, "She could not speak for others-who "Had other thoughts; herself she knew:" And so she brought me drink and food. After four days, the scouts pursued Another path: at last arrived The help my Paduan friends contrived To furnish me: she brought the news: For the first time I could not choose But kiss her hand and lay my own Upon her head—"This faith was shown "To Italy, our mother; -she "Uses my hand and blesses thee!" She followed down to the seashore: I left and never saw her more.

> How very long since I have thought Concerning—much less wished for—aught Beside the good of Italy For which I live and mean to die! I never was in love; and since Charles proved false, nothing could convince My inmost heart I had a friend; However, if I pleased to spend Real wishes on myself—say, Three— I know at least what one should be:

130

Three

I would grasp Metternich until I felt his red wet throat distil In blood thro' these two hands: and next, -Nor much for that am I perplexed-Charles, perjured traitor, for his part, Should die slow of a broken heart Under his new employers: last -Ah, there, what should I wish? For fast Do I grow old and out of strength.-If I resolved to seek at length My father's house again, how scared They all would look, and unprepared! My brothers live in Austria's pay -Disowned me long ago, men say; And all my early mates who used To praise me so-perhaps induced More than one early step of mine-Are turning wise; while some opine "Freedom grows Licence," some suspect "Haste breeds Delay," and recollect They always said, such premature Beginnings never could endure! So, with a sullen "All's for best," The land seems settling to its rest. I think, then, I should wish to stand This evening in that dear, lost land, Over the sea the thousand miles, And know if yet that woman smiles With the calm smile; some little farm She lives in there, no doubt; what harm If I sate on the door-side bench, And, while her spindle made a trench Fantastically in the dust, Inquired of all her fortunes-just

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150

To business! Fortù

Her children's ages and their names, And what may be the husband's aims For each of them—I'd talk this out, And sit there, for an hour about, Then kiss her hand once more, and lay Mine on her head, and go my way.

160

So much for idle wishing—how
It steals the time! To business now!

THE ENGLISHMAN IN ITALY

[PIANO DI SORRENTO]

Forrò, Fortù, my beloved one,
Sit here by my side,
On my knees put up both little feet!
I was sure, if I tried,
I could make you laugh spite of Scirocco:
Now, open your eyes—
Let me keep you amused till he vanish
In black from the skies,
With telling my memories over
As you tell your beads;
All the memories plucked at Sorrento
—The flowers, or the weeds.

IQ

Time for rain! for your long hot dry Autumn Had net-worked with brown The white skin of each grape on the bunches, Marked like a quail's crown,

THE ENGLISHMAN IN ITALY

III . Those creatures you make such account of, The storm Whose heads,—specked with white Over brown like a great spider's back, As I told you last night,-20 Your mother bites off for her supper; Red-ripe as could be, Pomegranates were chapping and splitting In halves on the tree: And betwixt the loose walls of great flintstone, Or in the thick dust On the path, or straight out of the rock side, Wherever could thrust Some burnt sprig of bold hardy rock-flower Its yellow face up, 30 For the prize were great butterflies fighting, Some five for one cup. So, I guessed, ere I got up this morning, What change was in store, By the quick rustle-down of the quail nets Which woke me before I could open my shutter, made fast With a bough and a stone, And look thro' the twisted dead vine-twigs, Sole lattice that 's known! Quick and sharp rang the rings down the net-poles, While, busy beneath, Your priest and his brother tugged at them, The rain in their teeth: And out upon all the flat house-roofs Where split figs lay drying,

Nor use seemed in trying To get out the boats and go fishing, For, under the cliff,

The girls took the frails under cover:

50

"Seafruit" and grapeharvest Fierce the black water frothed o'er the blind-rock.

No seeing our skiff

Arrive about noon from Amalfi,

-Our fisher arrive,

And pitch down his basket before us, All trembling alive

With pink and grey jellies, your sea-fruit,

-You touch the strange lumps,

And mouths gape there, eyes open, all manner Of horns and of humps,

60

80

Which only the fisher looks grave at,

While round him like imps Cling screaming the children as naked

And brown as his shrimps:

Himself too as bare to the middle—

---You see round his neck

The string and its brass coin suspended, That saves him from wreck.

But to-day not a boat reached Salerno, So back to a man

Came our friends, with whose help in the vineyards
Grape-harvest began:

In the vat, half-way up in our house-side,

Like blood the juice spins,

While your brother all bare-legged is dancing Till breathless he grins

Dead beaten, in effort on effort

To keep the grapes under, Since still when he seems all but master,

In pours the fresh plunder

From girls who keep coming and going With basket on shoulder,

And eyes shut against the rain's driving, Your girls that are older,—

THE ENGLISHMAN IN ITALY 113

For under the hedges of aloe, And where, on its bed country-Scirocco! Of the orchard's black mould, the love-apple Lies pulpy and red, All the young ones are kneeling and filling Their laps with the snails 90

Tempted out by this first rainy weather,—

مة ويسهم

Your best of regales,

As to-night will be proved to my sorrow, When, supping in state,

We shall feast our grape-gleaners (two dozen, Three over one plate)

With lasagne so tempting to swallow In slippery ropes,

And gourds fried in great purple slices, That colour of popes.

100 Meantime, see the grape-bunch they've brought you, -The rain-water slips

O'er the heavy blue bloom on each globe Which the wasp to your lips

Still follows with fretful persistence-Nay, taste, while awake,

This half of a curd-white smooth cheese-ball, That peels, flake by flake,

Like an onion's, each smoother and whiter; Next, sip this weak wine

From the thin green glass flask, with its stopper, A leaf of the vine,

And end with the prickly-pear's red flesh That leaves thro' its juice

The stony black seeds on your pearl-teeth . . Scirocco is loose!

Hark! the quick, whistling pelt of the olives Which, thick in one's track,

120

150

Ride over the mountains	Tempt the stranger to pick up and bite them, Tho' not yet half black!
mountains	How the old twisted olive trunks shudder!
	The medlars let fall
	Their hard fruit, and the brittle great fig-trees
	Snap off, figs and all,—
	For here comes the whole of the tempest!
	No refuge, but creep
	Back again to my side and my shoulder.

And listen or sleep.

O how will your country show next week, When all the vine-boughs 130 Have been stripped of their foliage to pasture The mules and the cows? Last eve, I rode over the mountains; Your brother, my guide, Soon left me, to feast on the myrtles That offered, each side, Their fruit-balls, black, glossy and luscious,-Or strip from the sorbs A treasure, so rosy and wondrous, Of hairy gold orbs! 140 But my mule picked his sure, sober path out, Just stopping to neigh When he recognised down in the valley His mates on their way With the faggots, and barrels of water: And soon we emerged From the plain, where the woods could scarce follow: And still as we urged Our way, the woods wondered, and left us, As up still we trudged

Though the wild path grew wilder each instant, And place was e'en grudged 'Mid the rock-chasms, and piles of loose stones (Like the loose broken teeth Of some monster, which climbed there to die From the ocean beneath) Place was grudged to the silver-grey fume-weed That clung to the path, And dark rosemary, ever a-dying, That, 'spite the wind's wrath, 160 So loves the salt rock's face to seaward,-And lentisks as staunch To the stone where they root and bear berries,— And . . . what shows a branch Coral-coloured, transparent, with circlets Of pale seagreen leaves— Over all trod my mule with the caution Of gleaner's o'er sheaves, Still, foot after foot like a lady-So, round after round, He climbed to the top of Calvano, And God's own profound Was above me, and round me the mountains, And under, the sea, And within me, my heart to bear witness What was and shall be! Oh heaven, and the terrible crystal! No rampart excludes Your eye from the life to be lived In the blue solitudes! 180 Oh, those mountains, their infinite movement! Still moving with you-

For, ever some new head and breast of them

Thrusts into view

		_
dountains and Siren	To observe the intruder—you see it If quickly you turn	
isles		
	And, before they escape you, surprise them—	
	They grudge you should learn	
	How the soft plains they look on, lean over,	
		90
	—Cower beneath them; the flat sea-pine crouche	:6,
	The wild fruit-trees bend,	
	E'en the myrtle-leaves curl, shrink and shut—	
	All is silent and grave—	
	'Tis a sensual and timorous beauty-	
	How fair, but a slave!	
	So, I turned to the sea,—and there slumbered	
	As greenly as ever	
	Those isles of the siren, your Galli;	
	No	00
	The Three, nor enable their sister	
	To join them,—half way	
	On the voyage, she looked at Ulysses—	
	No farther to-day;	
	Tho' the small one, just launched in the wave,	
	Watches breast-high and steady	
	From under the rock, her bold sister	
	Swum half-way already.	
	Fortù, shall we sail there together	
	A	
		10
	Quite new rocks show their faces—new haunts	
	Where the siren abides?	
	Shall we sail round and round them, close over	
	The rocks, tho' unseen.	

To glorious green?
Then scramble from splinter to splinter,
Reach land and explore,

That ruffle the grey glassy water

On the largest, the strange square black turret
With never a door,

Just a loop to admit the quick lizards;
Then, stand there and hear
The birds' quiet singing, that tells us
What life is, so clear!
The secret they sang to Ulysses,
When, ages ago,
He heard and he knew this life's secret,
I hear and I know!

Ah, see! The sun breaks o'er Calvano-He strikes the great gloom 230 And flutters it o'er the mount's summit In airy gold fume! All is over! Look out, see the gypsy, Our tinker and smith, Has arrived, set up bellows and forge, And down-squatted forthwith To his hammering, under the wall there; One eye keeps aloof The urchins that itch to be putting His jews'-harps to proof, 240 While the other, thro' locks of curled wire, Is watching how sleek Shines the hog, come to share in the windfalls —An abbot's own cheek! All is over! Wake up and come out now, And down let us go, And see the fine things got in order At Church for the show Of the Sacrament, set forth this evening: To-morrow's the Feast 250

260

Feast Of the Rosary's Virgin, by no means Of Virgins the least-Virgin As you'll hear in the off-hand discourse Which (all nature, no art) The Dominican brother, these three weeks, Was getting by heart. Not a post nor a pillar but's dizened With red and blue papers; All the roof waves with ribbons, each altar A-blaze with long tapers; But the great masterpiece is the scaffold Rigged glorious to hold All the fiddlers and fifers and drummers, And trumpeters bold, Not afraid of Bellini nor Auber, Who, when the priest's hoarse, Will strike us up something that's brisk For the Feast's second course. And then will the flaxen-wigged Image Be carried in pomp-Thro' the plain, while in gallant procession The priests mean to stomp. And all round the glad church lie old bottles With gunpowder stopped, Which will be, when the Image re-enters, Religiously popped. And at night from the crest of Calvano Great bonfires will hang, On the plain will the trumpets join chorus, And more poppers bang! At all events, come—to the garden, As far as the wall, See me tap with a hoe on the plaster

Till out there shall fall
A scorpion with wide angry nippers!

... "Such trifles"—you say?
Fortù, in my England at home,
Men meet gravely to-day
And debate, if abolishing Corn-laws
Is righteous and wise
—If 'tis proper, Scirocco should vanish
In black from the skies!

A glance at Wordsworth

290

THE LOST LEADER

I

Just for a handful of silver he left us. Just for a riband to stick in his coat-Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us, Lost all the others she lets us devote: They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver, So much was their's who so little allowed: How all our copper had gone for his service! Rags—were they purple, his heart had been proud! We that had loved him so, followed him, honoured him. Lived in his mild and magnificent eye, Learned his great language, caught his clear accents, Made him our pattern to live and to die! Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us, Burns, Shelley, were with us, -they watch from their graves!

He alone breaks from the van and the freemen, He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

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H

A wish for the apostate

We shall march prospering,—not thro' his presence; Songs may inspirit us,—not from his lyre;

Deeds will be done,—while he boasts his quiescence, Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire: 20 Blot out his name, then,—record one lost soul more.

One task more declined, one more footpath untrod.

One more triumph for devils, and sorrow for angels,
One wrong more to man, one more insult to
God!

Life's night begins: let him never come back to

There would be doubt, hesitation and pain,
Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,
Never glad confident morning again!

Best fight on well, for we taught him,—strike gallantly,

Aim at our heart ere we pierce through his own;

Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,

Pardoned in Heaven, the first by the throne!

THE LOST MISTRESS

1

ALL's over, then—does truth sound bitter
As one at first believes?
Hark, 'tis the sparrows' good-night twitter
About your cottage eaves!

HOME-THOUGHTS FROM ABROAD 121

11

And the leaf-buds on the vine are woolly,
I noticed that, to-day;
One day more bursts them open fully
—You know the red turns gray.

The next meeting

111

To-morrow we meet the same then, dearest?
May I take your hand in mine?
Mere friends are we,—well, friends the merest
Keep much that I'll resign:

IV

For each glance of that eye so bright and black, Though I keep with heart's endeavour,— Your voice, when you wish the snowdrops back, Though it stays in my soul for ever!—

v

—Yet I will but say what mere friends say, Or only a thought stronger; I will hold your hand but as long as all may, Or so very little longer!

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

OH, to be in England Now that April's there, And whoever wakes in England Sees, some morning, unaware,

Spring in That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!

П

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows—
Hark! where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice
over,

Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noon-tide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower,
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

Nobly, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the north-west died away;

Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz Bay;

Bluish mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar lay;

In the dimmest north-east distance, dawned Gibraltar grand and gray; "Here and here did England help me,—how can I help England?"—say,
Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise and pray,
While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa.

NATIONALITY IN DRINKS

1

My heart sunk with our Claret-flask,
Just now, beneath the heavy sedges
That serve this pond's black face for mask;
And still at yonder broken edges
Of the hole, where up the bubbles glisten,
After my heart I look and listen.

11

Our laughing little flask, compell'd
Thro' depth to depth more bleak and shady;
As when, both arms beside her held,
Feet straightened out, some gay French lady
Is caught up from Life's light and motion
And dropped into Death's silent ocean!

Up jumped Tokay on our table, Like a pygmy castle-warder, Dwarfish to see, but stout and able, Arms and accoutrements all in order;

Nelson's Blew with his bugle a challenge to Drouth,
Cocked his flap-hat with the tosspot-feather,
Twisted his thumb in his red moustache,
Jingled his huge brass spurs together,
Tightened his waist with its Buda sash,
And then with an impudence nought could abash,
Shrugged his hump-shoulder,
To tell the beholder,
For twenty such knaves he should laugh but the bolder,
And so with his sword-hilt gallantly jutting,
And dexter hand on his haunch abutting,

Went the little man from Ausbruch, strutting!

Here's to Nelson's memory! 30 'Tis the second time that I, at sea, Right off Cape Trafalgar here, Have drunk it deep in British beer: Nelson for ever-any time Am I his to command in prose or rhyme! Give me of Nelson only a touch, And I guard it, be it little or much: Here's one the Captain gives, and so Down at the word, by George, shall it go! He says that at Greenwich they show the beholder 40 Nelson's coat, "still with tar on the shoulder, "For he used to lean with one shoulder digging,

"Jigging, as it were, and zig-zag-zigging, "Up against the mizen rigging!"

THE BISHOP ORDERS HIS TOMB AT ST. PRAXED'S CHURCH

[ROME, 15---]

Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?
Nephews—sons mine...ah God, I know not!
Well—

A strange death-bed

She, men would have to be your mother once, Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was! What's done is done, and she is dead beside, Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since, And as she died so must we die ourselves, And thence ye may perceive the world's a dream. Life, how and what is it? As here I lie In this state chamber, dying by degrees, Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask "Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all. St. Praxed's ever was the church for peace; And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know: -Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care; Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner South He graced his carrion with, God curse the same! Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence 20 One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side, And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats, And up into the aery dome where live The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk: And I shall fill my slab of basalt there, And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest, With those nine columns round me, two and two,

Plea for The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands:

grandeur Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe

As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse

Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
Put me where I may look at him! True peach,
Rosy and flawless: how I earned the prize!

Draw close: that conflagration of my church

What then? So much was saved if aught were
missed!

My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood.

Drop water gently till the surface sinks, And if ye find . . Ah, God I know not, I! . . . Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft, 40 And corded up in a tight olive-frail, Some lump, ah God, of lapis lazuli, Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape, Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast . . . Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all, That brave Frascati villa with its bath. So, let the blue lump poise between my knees, Like God the Father's globe on both his hands Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay, For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst! 50 Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years: Man goeth to the grave, and where is he? Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black-'Twas ever antique-black I meant! How else Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath? The bas-relief in bronze you promised me, Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so, The Saviour at his sermon on the mount.

60 Rewards promised

St. Praxed in a glory, and one Pan Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off, And Moses with the tables . . . but I know Ye mark me not! What do they whisper thee, Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope To revel down my villas while I gasp Bricked o'er with beggar's mouldy travertine Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at! Nay, boys, ye love me-all of jasper, then! 'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve My bath must needs be left behind, alas! One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut, There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world-And have I not St. Praxed's ear to pray Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts, And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs? -That's if ye carve my epitaph aright, Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word, No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line-Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves his need! And then how I shall lie through centuries, 80 And hear the blessed mutter of the mass, And see God made and eaten all day long, And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste Good strong thick stupifying incense-smoke! For as I lie here, hours of the dead night, Dying in state and by such slow degrees, I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook, And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,

And let the bedclothes for a mortcloth drop
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-work:

And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,

Alive

About the life before I lived this life, or dead? And this life too, Popes, Cardinals and Priests, St. Praxed at his sermon on the mount, Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes, And new-found agate urns as fresh as day, And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet, -Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our friend? No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best! 100 Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage. All lapis, all, sons! Else I give the Pope My villas: will ye ever eat my heart? Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick. They glitter like your mother's for my soul, Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze, Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase With grapes, and add a vizor and a Term, And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down, 110 To comfort me on my entablature Whereon I am to lie till I must ask "Do I live, am I dead?" There, leave me, there! For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude To death-ye wish it-God, ye wish it! Stone-Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares which **sweat**

As if the corpse they keep were oozing through— And no more lapis to delight the world! Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there, But in a row: and, going, turn your backs 120 -Ay, like departing altar-ministrants, And leave me in my church, the church for peace, That I may watch at leisure if he leers-Old Gandolf, at me, from his onion-stone. As still he envied me, so fair she was!

GARDEN-FANCIES

I .- THE FLOWER'S NAME

1

HERE's the garden she walked across,
Arm in my arm, such a short while since:
Hark, now I push its wicket, the moss

sweet Spaniard

She must have reached this shrub ere she turned,
As back with that murmur the wicket swung;
For she laid the poor snail, my chance foot spurned,
To feed and forget it the leaves among.

Hinders the hinges and makes them wince!

1

Down this side of the gravel-walk

She went while her robe's edge brushed the box:

And here she paused in her gracious talk

To point me a moth on the milk-white flox.
Roses, ranged in valiant row,

I will never think that she passed you by! She loves you noble roses, I know; But yonder, see, where the rock-plants lie!

III

This flower she stopped at, finger on lip,
Stooped over, in doubt, as settling its claim;
Till she gave me, with pride to make no slip,
Its soft meandering Spanish name.
What a name! was it love, or praise?
Speech half-as-leep, or song half-awake?

June I must learn Spanish, one of these days, twice Only for that slow sweet name's sake.

IV

Roses, if I live and do well,
I may bring her, one of these days,
To fix you fast with as fine a spell,
Fit you each with his Spanish phrase!
But do not detain me now; for she lingers
There, like sunshine over the ground,
And ever I see her soft white fingers
Searching after the bud she found.

٧

Flower, you Spaniard, look that you grow not,
Stay as you are and be loved for ever!
Bud, if I kiss you 'tis that you blow not,
Mind, the shut pink mouth opens never!
For while thus it pouts, her fingers wrestle,
Twinkling the audacious leaves between,
Till round they turn and down they nestle—
Is not the dear mark still to be seen?

V

Where I find her not, beauties vanish;
Whither I follow her, beauties flee;
Is there no method to tell her in Spanish
June's twice June since she breathed it with me?
Come, bud, show me the least of her traces,
Treasure my lady's lightest foot-fall
—Ah, you may flout and turn up your faces—
Roses, you are not so fair after all!

II.—SIBRANDUS SCHAFNABURGENSIS

1

Plague take all your pedants, say I!

He who wrote what I hold in my hand,
Centuries back was so good as to die,
Leaving this rubbish to cumber the land;
This, that was a book in its time,
Printed on paper and bound in leather,
Last month in the white of a matin-prime
Just when the birds sang all together.

Revenge on a pedant

п

Into the garden I brought it to read,
And under the arbute and laurustine
Read it, so help me grace in my need,
From title-page to closing line.
Chapter on chapter did I count,
As a curious traveller counts Stonehenge;
Added up the mortal amount;
And then proceeded to my revenge.

111

Yonder's a plum-tree, with a crevice
An owl would build in, were he but sage;
For a lap of moss, like a fine pont-levis
In a castle of the middle age,
Joins to a lip of gum, pure amber;
When he'd be private, there might he spend
Hours alone in his lady's chamber:
Into this crevice I dropped our friend.

IV

A ruined book

—I knew at the bottom rain drippings stagnate;

Next a handful of blossoms I plucked

To bury him with, my bookshelf's magnate;

Then I went in-doors, brought out a loaf,

Half a cheese, and a bottle of Chablis;

Lay on the grass and forgot the oaf

Over a jolly chapter of Rabelais.

Now, this morning, betwixt the moss
And gum that locked our friend in limbo,
A spider had spun his web across,
And sate in the midst with arms a-kimbo:
So, I took pity, for learning's sake,
And, de profundis, accentibus latis,
Cantate! quoth I, as I got a rake,
And up I fished his delectable treatise.

V.

Here you have it, dry in the sun,
With all the binding all of a blister,
And great blue spots where the ink has run,
And reddish streaks that wink and glister
O'er the page so beautifully yellow—
Oh, well have the droppings played their tricks!
Did he guess how toadstools grow, this fellow?
Here's one stuck in his chapter six!

VII

How did he like it when the live creatures

Tickled and toused and browsed him all over,
And worm, slug, eft, with serious features,
Came in, each one, for his right of trover;
When the water-beetle with great blind deaf face
Made of her eggs the stately deposit,

in a library

And the newt borrowed just so much of the preface As tiled in the top of his black wife's closet.

VIII

All that life, and fun, and romping,
All that frisking, and twisting, and coupling,
While slowly our poor friend's leaves were
swamping,

And clasps were cracking, and covers suppling!
As if you had carried sour John Knox
To the play-house at Paris, Vienna or Munich

To the play-house at Paris, Vienna, or Munich, Fastened him into a front-row box,

And danced off the Ballet with trousers and tunic.

1X

Come, old martyr! What, torment enough is it?
Back to my room shall you take your sweet self!
Good bye, mother-beetle; husband-eft, sufficit!
See the snug niche I have made on my shelf:
A.'s book shall prop you up, B.'s shall cover you,
Here's C. to be grave with, or D. to be gay,
And with E. on each side, and F. right over you,
Dry-rot at ease till the Judgment-day!

THE LABORATORY

ANCIEN RÉGIME

A jealous Now that I, tying thy glass mask tightly, murderess May gaze thro' these faint smokes curling whitely As thou pliest thy trade in this devil's-smithy-Which is the poison to poison her, prithee?

11

He is with her; and they know that I know Where they are, what they do: they believe my tears flow

While they laugh, laugh at me, at me fled to the drear

Empty church, to pray God in, for them !—I am here.

ш

Grind away, moisten and mash up thy paste, Pound at thy powder,—I am not in haste! Better sit thus, and observe thy strange things, Than go where men wait me and dance at the King's.

That in the mortar-you call it a gum? Ah, the brave tree whence such gold oozings come!

And yonder soft phial, the exquisite blue, Sure to taste sweetly,—is that poison too? v

Had I but all of them, thee and thy treasures, What a wild crowd of invisible pleasures! To carry pure death in an earring, a casket, A signet, a fan-mount, a fillagree-basket! Imagin**ed** victims

VI

Soon, at the King's, a mere lozenge to give And Pauline should have just thirty minutes to live!

But to light a pastille, and Elise, with her head, And her breast, and her arms, and her hands, should drop dead!

VII

Quick—is it finished? The colour's too grim! Why not soft like the phial's, enticing and dim? Let it brighten her drink, let her turn it and stir, And try it and taste, ere she fix and prefer!

VIII

What a drop! She's not little, no minion like me-

That's why she ensnared him: this never will free

The soul from those strong, great eyes,—say, "no!"

To that pulse's magnificent come-and-go.

IX

She gloats and My own eyes to bear on her so, that I thought Could I keep them one half minute fixed, she would fall,

Shrivelled; she fell not; yet this does it all!

X

Not that I bid you spare her the pain! Let death be felt and the proof remain; Brand, burn up, bite into its grace— He is sure to remember her dying face!

XI

Is it done? Take my mask off! Nay, be not morose,

It kills her, and this prevents seeing it close:

The delicate droplet, my whole fortune's fee—

If it hurts her, beside, can it ever hurt me?

XII

Now, take all my jewels, gorge gold to your fill, You may kiss me, old man, my mouth if you will!

But brush this dust off me, lest horror it brings

Ere I know it—next moment I dance at the

King's!

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THE CONFESSIONAL

SPAIN]

I

IT is a lie—their Priests, their Pope,
Their Saints, their . . . all they fear or hope
Are lies, and lies—there! thro' my door
And ceiling, there! and walls and floor,
There, lies, they lie, shall still be hurled,
Till spite of them I reach the world!

A young sceptic's mistress

П

You think Priests just and holy men! Before they put me in this den, I was a human creature too, With flesh and blood like one of you, A girl that laughed in beauty's pride Like lilies in your world outside.

ш

I had a lover—shame avaunt!
This poor wrenched body, grim and gaunt,
Was kissed all over till it burned,
By lips the truest, love e'er turned
His heart's own tint: one night they kissed
My soul out in a burning mist.

I٧

She confesses, and is trapped So, next day when the accustomed train Of things grew round my sense again, "That is a sin," I said—and slow With downcast eyes to church I go, And pass to the confession-chair, And tell the old mild father there.

7

But when I faulter Beltran's name, "Ha?" quoth the father; "much I blame "The sin; yet wherefore idly grieve? "Despair not,—strenuously retrieve!

"Nay, I will turn this love of thine "To lawful love, almost divine.

٧ì

"For he is young, and led astray,

"This Beltran, and he schemes, men say,
"To change the laws of church and state:

"So, thine shall be an angel's fate,

"Who, ere the thunder breaks, should roll

"Its cloud away and save his soul.

VII

"For, when he lies upon thy breast,
"Thou mayst demand and be possessed

"Of all his plans, and next day steal

"To me, and all those plans reveal,

"That I and every priest, to purge

"His soul, may fast and use the scourge."

VIII

That father's beard was long and white,
With love and truth his brow seemed bright;
I went back, all on fire with joy,
And, that same evening, bade the boy,
Tell me, as lovers should, heart-free,
Something to prove his love of me.

into betraying her lover

IX

He told me what he would not tell For hope of Heaven or fear of Hell; And I lay listening in such pride, And, soon as he had left my side, Tripped to the church by morning-light To save his soul in his despite.

X

I told the father all his schemes,
Who were his comrades, what their dreams;
"And now make haste," I said, "to pray
"The one spot from his soul away:
"To-night he comes, but not the same
"Will look!" At night he never came.

X1

Nor next night: on the after-morn, I went forth with a strength new-born: The church was empty; something drew My steps into the street; I knew It led me to the market-place—Where, lo,—on high—the father's face!

XII

Scaffold

That horrible black scaffold drestand prison The stapled block . . God sink the rest! That head strapped back, that blinding vest, Those knotted hands and naked breast-Till near one busy hangman pressed-And—on the neck these arms caressed. .

XIII

No part in aught they hope or fear! No Heaven with them, no Hell,—and here, No Earth, not so much space as pens My body in their worst of dens But shall bear God and Man my cry-Lies-lies, again-and still, they lie!

THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS

You're my friend: I was the man the Duke spoke to; I helped the Duchess to cast off his yoke, too; So, here's the tale from beginning to end, My friend!

11

Ours is a great wild country: If you climb to our castle's top, I don't see where your eye can stop; For when you've passed the corn-field country, Where vineyards leave off, flocks are packed, And sheep-range leads to cattle-tract,

THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS 141

And cattle-tract to open-chase, And open-chase to the very base Of the mountain, where, at a funeral pace, Round about, solemn and slow, One by one, row after row, Up and up the pine-trees go, So, like black priests up, and so Down the other side again To another greater, wilder country, 20 That's one vast red drear burnt-up plain, Branched thro' and thro' with many a vein Whence iron's dug, and copper's dealt; Look right, look left, look straight before,-Beneath they mine, above they smelt, Copper-ore and iron-ore, And forge and furnace mould and melt, And so on, more and ever more, Till, at the last, for a bounding belt, Comes the salt sand hoar of the great sea shore, 30 -And the whole is our Duke's country!

III

I was born the day this present Duke was—
(And O, says the song, ere I was old!)
In the castle where the other Duke was—
(When I was hopeful and young, not old!)
I in the Kennel, he in the Bower:
We are of like age to an hour.
My father was Huntsman in that day;
Who has not heard my father say
That, when a boar was brought to bay,
Three times, four times out of five,
With his huntspear he'd contrive

The Duke's country

The narrator's father

To get the killing-place transfixed, And pin him true, both eyes betwixt? And that's why the old Duke had rather Have lost a salt-pit than my father, And loved to have him ever in call; That's why my father stood in the hall When the old Duke brought his infant out To show the people, and while they passed 50 The wondrous bantling round about, Was first to start at the outside blast As the Kaiser's courier blew his horn, Just a month after the babe was born. "And" quoth the Kaiser's courier, "since "The Duke has got an Heir, our Prince " Needs the Duke's self at his side:" The Duke looked down and seemed to wince, But he thought of wars o'er the world wide, Castles a-fire, men on their march. 60 The toppling tower, the crashing arch: And up he looked, and awhile he eved The row of crests and shields and banners. Of all achievements after all manners. And "ay," said the Duke with a surly pride. The more was his comfort when he died At next year's end, in a velvet suit, With a gilt glove on his hand, and his foot In a silken shoe for a leather boot, Petticoated like a herald. In a chamber next to an ante-room, Where he breathed the breath of page and groom, What he called stink, and they, perfume: -They should have set him on red Berold, Mad with pride, like fire to manage! They should have got his cheek fresh tannage

THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS 143

Such a day as to-day in the merry sunshine!

Had they stuck on his fist a rough-foot merlin!

—Hark, the wind's on the heath at its game!

Oh for a noble falcon-lanner

To flap each broad wing like a banner,
And turn in the wind, and dance like flame!)

Had they broached a cask of white beer from Berlin!

—Or if you incline to prescribe mere wine—
Put to his lips when they saw him pine,
A cup of our own Moldavia fine,
Cotnar, for instance, green as May sorrel,
And ropy with sweet,—we shall not quarrel.

The sick tall yellow Duchess

I

So, at home, the sick tall yellow Duchess Was left with the infant in her clutches, She being the daughter of God knows who: And now was the time to revisit her tribe, So, abroad and afar they went, the two, And let our people rail and gibe At the empty Hall and extinguished fire, As loud as we liked, but ever in vain, Till after long years we had our desire, And back came the Duke and his mother again.

90

V

And he came back the pertest little ape That ever affronted human shape; Full of his travel, struck at himself— You'd say, he despised our bluff old ways

100

The —Not he! For in Paris they told the elf young That our rough North land was the Land of Lays, The one good thing left in evil days; Since the Mid-Age was the Heroic Time, And only in wild nooks like ours Could you taste of it yet as in its prime, And see true castles, with proper towers, Young-hearted women, old-minded men, And manners now as manners were then. So, all that the old Dukes had been, without knowing it,

IIO

120

This Duke would fain know he was, without being it;

'Twas not for the joy's self, but the joy of his showing it,

Nor for the pride's self, but the pride of our seeing it,

He revived all usages thoroughly worn-out, The souls of them fumed-forth, the hearts of them torn-out:

And chief in the chase his neck he perilled, On a lathy horse, all legs and length, With blood for bone, all speed, no strength; -They should have set him on red Berold, With the red eye slow consuming in fire, And the thin stiff ear like an abbey spire!

AI,

Well, such as he was, he must marry, we heard: And out of a convent, at the word, Came the Lady, in time of spring. —Oh, old thoughts they cling, they cling!

THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS 145

That day, I know, with a dozen oaths I clad myself in thick hunting-clothes Fit for the chase of urox or buffle **T30** In winter-time when you need to muffle; But the Duke had a mind we should cut a figure, And so we saw the Lady arrive: My friend, I have seen a white crane bigger! She was the smallest lady alive, Made, in a piece of Nature's madness, Too small, almost, for the life and gladness That over-filled her, as some hive Out of the bears' reach on the high trees Is crowded with its safe merry bees: In truth, she was not hard to please! Up she looked, down she looked, round at the mead.

Straight at the castle, that 's best indeed To look at from outside the walls:
As for us, styled the "serfs and thralls,"
She as much thanked me as if she had said it,
(With her eyes, do you understand?)
Because I patted her horse while I led it;
And Max, who rode on her other hand,
Said, no bird flew past but she enquired 150
What its true name was, nor ever seemed tired—
If that was an eagle she saw hover,—
If the green and gray bird on the field was the ployer.

When suddenly appeared the Duke, And as down she sprung, the small foot pointed On to my hand,—as with a rebuke, And as if his backbone were not jointed, The Duke stepped rather aside than forward, And welcomed her with his grandest smile;

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The young Duchess

160

And, mind you, his mother all the while Chilled in the rear, like a wind to Nor'ward: brightness And up, like a weary yawn, with its pullies Went, in a shriek, the rusty portcullis; And, like a glad sky the north-wind sullies, The Lady's face stopped its play, As if her first hair had grown grey-For such things must begin some one day!

VII

In a day or two she was well again; As who should say, "You labour in vain! "This is all a jest against God, who meant 170 "I should ever be, as I am, content "And glad in his sight; therefore, glad I will be!" So, smiling as at first went she.

VIII

She was active, stirring, all fire— Could not rest, could not tire-To a stone she had given life! (I myself loved once, in my day,) -For a Shepherd's, Miner's, Huntsman's wife, (I had a wife, I know what I say,) Never in all the world such an one! 180 And here was plenty to be done, And she that could do it, great or small, She was to do nothing at all. There was already this man in his post, This in his station, and that in his office. And the Duke's plan admitted a wife, at most, To meet his eye, with the other trophies,

Now outside the Hall, now in it, To sit thus, stand thus, see and be seen, At the proper place in the proper minute, 190 And die away the life between. And it was amusing enough, each infraction Of rule (but for after-sadness that came)-To hear the consummate self-satisfaction With which the young Duke and the old Dame Would let her advise, and criticise, And, being a fool, instruct the wise, And, child-like, parcel out praise or blame: They bore it all in complacent guise, As tho' an artificer, after contriving 200 A wheel-work image as if it were living, Should find with delight it could motion to strike him! So found the Duke, and his mother like him,-The Lady hardly got a rebuff-That had not been contemptuous enough,

ıx

With his cursed smirk, as he nodded applause, And kept off the old mother-cat's claws.

So, the little Lady grew silent and thin,
Paling and ever paling,
As the way is with a hid chagrin;
And the Duke perceived that she was ailing,
And said in his heart, "'Tis done to spite me,
"But I shall find in my power to right me!"
Don't swear, friend—the Old One, many a year,
Is in Hell, and the Duke's self... you shall hear.

She grows silent

x

Traditional Well, early in autumn, at first winter-warning, wood-craft When the stag had to break with his foot, of a morning,

A drinking-hole out of the fresh tender ice That covered the pond till the sun, in a trice, Loosening it, let out a ripple of gold, And another and another, and faster and faster, Till, dimpling to blindness, the wide water rolled: Then it so chanced that the Duke our master Asked himself what were the pleasures in season, And found, since the calendar bade him be hearty, He should do the Middle Age no treason In resolving on a hunting-party. Always provided, old books showed the way of it! What meant old poets by their strictures? And when old poets had said their say of it. How taught old painters in their pictures? We must revert to the proper channels, Workings in tapestry, paintings on pannels, And gather up Woodcraft's authentic traditions: Here was food for our various ambitions, As on each case, exactly stated,

—To encourage your dog, now, the properest chirrup,

Or best prayer to St. Hubert on mounting your

stirrup--

We of the household took thought and debated. Blessed was he whose back ached with the jerkin His sire was wont to do forest-work in;

Blesseder he who nobly sunk "ohs"

And "ahs" while he tugged on his grandsire's

l "ahs" while he tugged on his grandsire's trunkhose;

Costumes: the Lady's

What signified hats if they had no rims on, Each slouching before and behind like the scallop, functions And able to serve at sea for a shallop, Loaded with lacquer and looped with crimson? So that the deer now, to make a short rhyme on't, What with our Venerer's, Prickers, and Verderers, Might hope for real hunters at length, and not murderers. 250

And oh, the Duke's tailor—he had a hot time on't!

XI

Now you must know, that when the first dizziness Of flap-hats and buff-coats and jackboots subsided, The Duke put this question, "The Duke's part provided,

"Had not the Duchess some share in the business?" For out of the mouth of two or three witnesses. Did he establish all fit-or-unfitnesses: And, after much laying of heads together, Somebody's cap got a notable feather

By the announcement with proper unction 260 That he had discovered the lady's function; Since ancient authors held this tenet.

"When horns wind a mort and the deer is at siege,

"Let the dame of the Castle prick forth on her jennet,

66 And with water to wash the hands of her liege

"In a clean ewer with a fair toweling, "Let her preside at the disemboweling." Now, my friend, if you had so little religion As to catch a hawk, some falcon-lanner,

270

And thrust her broad wings like a banner declines Into a coop for a vulgar pigeon;

And if day by day, and week by week, You cut her claws, and sealed her eyes, And clipped her wings, and tied her beak, Would it cause you any great surprise If when you decided to give her an airing You found she needed a little preparing? -I say, should you be such a curmudgeon, If she clung to the perch, as to take it in dudgeon? Yet when the Duke to his lady signified, Just a day before, as he judged most dignified, In what a pleasure she was to participate,-And, instead of leaping wide in flashes, Her eyes just lifted their long lashes, As if pressed by fatigue even he could not

dissipate,

And duly acknowledged the Duke's forethought. But spoke of her health, if her health were worth aught,

Of the weight by day and the watch by night, And much wrong now that used to be right, So, thanking him, declined the hunting .-Was conduct ever more affronting? With all the ceremony settled-With the towel ready, and the sewer Polishing up his oldest ewer, And the jennet pitched upon, a piebald, Black-barred, cream-coated and pink eye-ball'd,-No wonder if the Duke was nettled! And when she persisted nevertheless,-Well, I suppose here's the time to confess That there ran half round our Lady's chamber 300 A balcony none of the hardest to clamber;

And that Jacynth the tire-woman, ready in waiting, is rated by her Stayed in call outside, what need of relating?

And since Jacynth was like a June rose, why, a in-law fervent

Adorer of Jacynth, of course, was your servant;

And if she had the habit to peep through the
casement,

How could I keep at any vast distance?
And so, as I say, on the Lady's persistence,
The Duke, dumb stricken with amazement,
Stood for a while in a sultry smother,
And then, with a smile that partook of the awful,
Turned her over to his yellow mother
To learn what was decorous and lawful;
And the mother smelt blood with a cat-like
instinct,

As her cheek quick whitened thro' all its quincetinct-

Oh, but the Lady heard the whole truth at once! What meant she?—Who was she?—Her duty and station,

The wisdom of age and the folly of youth, at once, Its decent regard and its fitting relation—
In brief, my friend, set all the devils in hell free And turn them out to carouse in a belfry,
And treat the priests to a fifty-part canon,
And then you may guess how that tongue of hers ran on!

Well, somehow or other it ended at last And, licking her whiskers, out she passed; And after her,—making (he hoped) a face Like Emperor Nero or Sultan Saladin, Stalked the Duke's self with the austere grace Of ancient hero or modern paladin,—

Gypsies From door to staircase—oh, such a solemn Unbending of the vertebral column!

330

XII

However, at sunrise our company mustered, And here was the huntsman bidding unkennel, And there 'neath his bonnet the pricker blustered, With feather dank as a bough of wet fennel; For the court-yard's four walls were filled with

fog

You might cut as an axe chops a log.

Like so much wool for colour and bulkiness;

And out rode the Duke in a perfect sulkiness,
Since before breakfast, a man feels but queasily,
340

And a sinking at the lower abdomen

Begins the day with indifferent omen:
And lo, as he looked around uneasily,
The sun ploughed the fog up and drove it asunder
This way and that from the valley under;
And, looking thro' the court-yard arch,
Down in the valley, what should meet him
But a troop of Gypsies on their march,
No doubt with the annual gifts to greet him.

XIII

Now, in your land, Gypsies reach you, only
After reaching all lands beside;
North they go, south they go, trooping or lonely,
And still, as they travel far and wide,
Catch they and keep now a trace here, a trace
there,

That puts you in mind of a place here, a place there:

But with us, I believe they rise out of the ground, Their And nowhere else, I take it, are found With the earth-tint yet so freshly embrowned; Born, no doubt, like insects which breed on The very fruit they are meant to feed on: For the earth-not a use to which they don't turn it.

The ore that grows in the mountain's womb, Or the sand in the pits like a honeycomb, They sift and soften it, bake it and burn it-Whether they weld you, for instance, a snaffle With side-bars never a brute can baffle; Or a lock that's a puzzle of wards within wards; Or, if your colt's fore-foot inclines to curve inwards.

Horseshoes they'll hammer which turn on a swivel And won't allow the hoof to shrivel; Then they cast bells like the shell of the winkle, That keep a stout heart in the ram with their tinkle: But the sand—they pinch and pound it like otters; Commend me to Gypsy glass-makers and potters! Glasses they'll blow you, crystal-clear, Where just a faint cloud of rose shall appear, As if in pure water you dropped and let die A bruised black-blooded mulberry; And that other sort, their crowning pride, With long white threads distinct inside, Like the lake-flower's fibrous roots which dangle Loose such a length and never tangle, Where the bold sword-lily cuts the clear waters, And the cup-lily couches with all the white daughters:

Such are the works they put their hand to, And the uses they turn and twist iron and sand to.

The And these made the troop which our Duke saw sallv

Towards his castle from out of the valley, Men and women, like new-hatched spiders. Come out with the morning to greet our riders; 390 And up they wound till they reached the ditch, Whereat all stopped save one, a witch, That I knew, as she hobbled from the group, By her gait, directly, and her stoop, I, whom Jacynth was used to importune To let that same witch tell us our fortune. The oldest Gypsy then above ground: And, so sure as the autumn season came round, She paid us a visit for profit or pastime, And every time, as she swore, for the last time. 400 And presently she was seen to sidle Up to the Duke till she touched his bridle, So that the horse of a sudden reared up As under its nose the old witch peered up With her worn-out eyes, or rather eye-holes Of no use now but to gather brine, And began a kind of level whine Such as they used to sing to their viols When their ditties they go grinding Up and down with nobody minding: And, then as of old, at the end of the humming Her usual presents were forthcoming -A dog-whistle blowing the fiercest of trebles, (Just a sea-shore stone holding a dozen fine pebbles,)

Or a porcelain mouth-piece to screw on a pipe-

And so she awaited her annual stipend. But this time, the Duke would scarcely youchsafe A word in reply; and in vain she felt With twitching fingers at her belt For the purse of sleek pine-martin pelt, 420 Duche Ready to put what he gave in her pouch safe,-Till, either to quicken his apprehension, Or possibly with an after-intention, She was come, she said, to pay her duty To the new Duchess, the youthful beauty. No sooner had she named his Lady, Than a shine lit up the face so shady, And its smirk returned with a novel meaning— For it struck him, the babe just wanted weaning; If one gave her a taste of what life was and sorrow, She, foolish to-day, would be wiser to-morrow; And who so fit a teacher of trouble As this sordid crone bent wellnigh double? So, glancing at her wolf-skin vesture, (If such it was, for they grow so hirsute That their own fleece serves for natural fur suit) He was contrasting, 'twas plain from his gesture, The life of the lady so flower-like and delicate With the loathsome squalor of this helicat. I, in brief, was the man the Duke beckoned From out of the throng, and while I drew near He told the crone, as I since have reckoned By the way he bent and spoke into her ear With circumspection and niystery, The main of the Lady's history, Her frowardness and ingratitude; And for all the crone's submissive attitude I could see round her mouth the loose plaits tightening, And her brow with assenting intelligence brightening,

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The Gypsy As tho' she engaged with hearty goodwill 450 Whatever he now might enjoin to fulfil, And promised the lady a thorough frightening. And so, just giving her a glimpse Of a purse, with the air of a man who imps The wing of the hawk that shall fetch the hernshaw, He bade me take the gypsy mother And set her telling some story or other Of hill or dale, oak-wood or fernshaw, To while away a weary hour For the Lady left alone in her bower, 460 Whose mind and body craved exertion And yet shrank from all better diversion.

XIV

Then clapping heel to his horse, the mere curvetter, Out rode the Duke, and after his hollo Horses and hounds swept, huntsman and servitor, And back I turned and bade the crone follow. And what makes me confident what's to be told

you Had all along been of this crone's devising, Is, that, on looking round sharply, behold you, There was a novelty quick as surprising: For first, she had shot up a full head in stature, And her step kept pace with mine nor faultered, As if age had foregone its usurpature, And the ignoble mien was wholly altered, And the face looked quite of another nature, And the change reached too, whatever the change

Her shaggy wolf-skin cloak's arrangement,

meant.

THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS 157

For where its tatters hung loose like sedges, Gold coins were glittering on the edges, Like the band-roll strung with tomans 480 Which proves the veil a Persian woman's: And under her brow, like a snail's horns newly Come out as after the rain he paces, Two unmistakeable eye-points duly Live and aware looked out of their places. So we went and found Jacynth at the entry Of the Lady's chamber standing sentry; I told the command and produced my companion, And Jacynth rejoiced to admit any one, For since last night, by the same token, 490 Not a single word had the Lady spoken: So they went in both to the presence together, While I in the balcony watched the weather.

XV

And now, what took place at the very first of all, I cannot tell, as I never could learn it:
Jacynth constantly wished a curse to fall
On that little head of hers and burn it,
If she knew how she came to drop so soundly
Asleep of a sudden and there continue
The whole time sleeping as profoundly
As one of the boars my father would pin you
'Twixt the eyes where the life holds garrison,

Jacynth forgive me the comparison!
But where I begin my own narration
Is a little after I took my station
To breathe the fresh air from the balcony,
And, having in those days a falcon eye,
To follow the hunt thro' the open country,

The From where the bushes thinlier crested Duchess The hillocks, to a plain where 's not one tree:—
the witch When, in a moment, my ear was arrested

51

511 By-was it singing, or was it saying, Or a strange musical instrument playing In the chamber ?---and to be certain I pushed the lattice, pulled the curtain, And there lay Jacynth asleep, Yet as if a watch she tried to keep, In a rosy sleep along the floor With her head against the door; While in the midst, on the seat of state, 520 Like a queen the Gypsy woman sate, With head and face downbent On the Lady's head and face intent, For, coiled at her feet like a child at ease, The Lady sate between her knees And o'er them the Lady's clasped hands met, And on those hands her chin was set. And her upturned face met the face of the crone Wherein the eyes had grown and grown As if she could double and quadruple 530 At pleasure the play of either pupil -Very like by her hands slow fanning, As up and down like a gor-crow's flappers They moved to measure like bell clappers -I said, is it blessing, is it banning, Do they applaud you or burlesque you? Those hands and fingers with no flesh on? When, just as I thought to spring in to the rescue, At once I was stopped by the Lady's expression: For it was life her eyes were drinking From the crone's wide pair above unwinking, Life's pure fire received without shrinking.

THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS 159

Into the heart and breast whose heaving
Told you no single drop they were leaving—
Life, that filling her, past redundant
Into her very hair, back swerving
Over each shoulder, loose and abundant,
As her head thrown back showed the white throat
curving.

to join the Gypsics

And the very tresses shared in the pleasure, Moving to the mystic measure, Bounding as the bosom bounded. I stopped short, more and more confounded, As still her cheeks burned and eyes glistened, As she listened and she listened. When all at once a hand detained me. And the selfsame contagion gained me, And I kept time to the wondrous chime, Making out words and prose and rhyme, Till it seemed that the music furled Its wings like a task fulfilled, and dropped From under the words it first had propped, And left them midway in the world, And word took word as hand takes hand. I could hear at last, and understand, And when I held the unbroken thread, The Gypsy said:-

- 560

550

"And so at last we find my tribe,
And so I set thee in the midst,
And to one and all of them describe
What thou saidst and what thou didst,
Our long and terrible journey thro',
And all thou art ready to say and do
In the trials that remain:
I trace them the vein and the other vein

570

Trial

That meet on thy brow and part again, after trial Making our rapid mystic mark; And I bid my people prove and probe Each eve's profound and glorious globe Till they detect the kindred spark In those depths so dear and dark, 580 Like the spots that snap, and burst, and flee, Circling over the midnight sea. And on that young round cheek of thine I make them recognise the tinge, As when of the costly scarlet wine They drip so much as will impinge And spread in a thinnest scale affoat One thick gold drop from the olive's coat Over a silver plate whose sheen Still thro' the mixture shall be seen. 590 For, so I prove thee, to one and all, Fit, when my people ope their breast, To see the sign, and hear the call. And take the vow, and stand the test Which adds one more child to the rest-When the breast is bare and the arms are wide. And the world is left outside. For there is probation to decree, And many and long must the trials be Thou shalt victoriously endure, 600 If that brow is true and those eyes are sure: Like a jewel-finder's fierce assay Of the prize he dug from its mountain tomb,— Let once the vindicating ray Leap out amid the anxious gloom, And steel and fire have done their part - And the prize falls on its finder's heart; So, trial after trial past,

THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS 161

Wilt thou fall at the very last Vine or tree? Breathless, half in trance With the thrill of the great deliverance, Into our arms for evermore; And thou shalt know, those arms once curled About thee, what we knew before, How love is the only good in the world. Henceforth be loved as heart can love, Or brain devise, or hand approve! Stand up, look below, It is our life at thy feet we throw To step with into light and joy; 620 Not a power of life but we'll employ To satisfy thy nature's want; Art thou the tree that props the plant, Or the climbing plant that seeks the tree-Canst thou help us, must we help thee? If any two creatures grew into one, They would do more than the world has done; Tho' each apart were never so weak, Yet vainly thro' the world should ye seek For the knowledge and the might 630 Which in such union grew their right: So, to approach, at least, that end, And blend,—as much as may be, blend Thee with us or us with thee. As climbing-plant or propping-tree, Shall some one deck thee, over and down, Up and about, with blossoms and leaves? Fix his heart's fruit for thy garland crown, Cling with his soul as the gourd-vine cleaves, Die on thy boughs and disappear 640 While not a leaf of thine is sere? Or is the other fate in store,

to age

Thro' life And art thou fitted to adore. To give thy wondrous self away, And take a stronger nature's sway? I foresee and I could foretell Thy future portion, sure and well-But those passionate eyes speak true, speak true, And let them say what thou shalt do! Only, be sure thy daily life, 650 In its peace, or in its strife, Never shall be unobserved: We pursue thy whole career, And hope for it, or doubt, or fear,-Lo, hast thou kept thy path or swerved, We are beside thee, in all thy ways, With our blame, with our praise, Our shame to feel, our pride to show, Glad, sorry—but indifferent, no! Whether it is thy lot to go, 660 For the good of us all, where the haters meet In the crowded city's horrible street; Or thou step alone thro' the morass Where never sound yet was Save the dry quick clap of the stork's bill, For the air is still, and the water still, When the blue breast of the dipping coot Dives under, and all again is mute. So at the last shall come old age. Decrepit as befits that stage; How else wouldst thou retire apart With the hoarded memories of thy heart, And gather all to the very least Of the fragments of life's earlier feast, Let fall through eagerness to find The crowning dainties yet behind?

A transformation

Ponder on the entire past
Laid together thus at last,
When the twilight helps to fuse
The first fresh, with the faded hues,
And the outline of the whole,
As round eve's shades their framework roll,
Grandly fronts for once thy soul:
And then as, 'mid the dark, a gleam
Of yet another morning breaks,
And like the hand which ends a dream,
Death, with the might of his sunbeam
Touches the flesh and the soul awakes,
Then—''

But what? For here her voice changed like a bird's: There grew more of the music and less of the Had Jacynth only been by me to clap pen To paper and put you down every syllable, With those clever clerkly fingers, All that I've forgotten as well as what lingers In this old brain of mine that's but ill able To give you even this poor version Of the speech I spoil, as it were, with stammering -More fault of those who had the hammering Of prosody into me and syntax, And did it, not with hobnails but tintacks! But to return from this excursion,-Just, do you mark, when the song was sweetest, The peace most deep and the charm completest, There came, shall I say, a snap-

And the charm vanished!

Ay, then, indeed, something would happen!

And my sense returned, so strangely banished, bewitched And, starting as from a nap, I knew the crone was bewitching my lady, With Jacynth asleep; and but one spring made I, Down from the casement, round to the portal, 711 Another minute and I had entered, When the door opened, and more than mortal Stood, with a face where to my mind centred All beauties I ever saw or shall see. The Duchess—I stopped as if struck by palsy. She was so different, happy and beautiful, I felt at once that all was best, And that I had nothing to do, for the rest, But wait her commands, obey and be dutiful. 720 Not that, in fact, there was any commanding, -I saw the glory of her eye, And the brow's height and the breast's expand-

> And I was here to live or to die. As for finding what she wanted, You know God Almighty granted Such little signs should serve his wild creatures To tell one another all their desires. So that each knows what its friend requires, And does its bidding without teachers. I preceded her; the crone Followed silent and alone; I spoke to her, but she merely jabbered In the old style; both her eyes had slunk Back to their pits; her stature shrunk; In short, the soul in its body sunk Like a blade sent home to its scabbard. We descended, I preceding; Crossed the court with nobody heeding;

730

740 Shemounts with the Gypsy

All the world was at the chase, The court-yard like a desert-place, The stable emptied of its small fry; I saddled myself the very palfrey I remember patting while it carried her, The day she arrived and the Duke married her. And, do you know, though it's easy deceiving Oneself in such matters, I can't help believing The lady had not forgotten it either, And knew the poor devil so much beneath her Would have been only too glad for her service 750 To dance on hot ploughshares like a Turk dervise, But unable to pay proper duty where owing it Was reduced to that pitiful method of showing it: For though the moment I began setting His saddle on my own nag of Berold's begetting, (Not that I meant to be obtrusive) She stopped me, while his rug was shifting, By a single rapid finger's lifting, And, with a gesture kind but conclusive, And a little shake of the head, refused me, - 760 I say, although she never used me, Yet when she was mounted, the gypsy behind her, And I ventured to remind her, I suppose with a voice of less steadiness Than usual, for my feeling exceeded me, -Something to the effect that I was in readiness Whenever God should please she needed me,-Then, do you know, her face looked down on me With a look that placed a crown on me, And she felt in her bosom,—mark, her bosom-And, as a flower-tree drops its blossom, 770 Dropped me-ah, had it been a purse Of silver, my friend, or gold that's worse,

They ride Why, you see, as soon as I found myself
So understood,—that a true heart so may gain
Such a reward,—I should have gone home again,
Kissed Jacynth, and soberly drowned myself!
It was a little plait of hair
Such as friends in a convent make
To wear, each for the other's sake,—
This, see, which at my breast I wear,
Ever did (rather to Jacynth's grudgment),
And ever shall, till the Day of Judgment.
And then,—and then,—to cut short,—this is idle,
These are feelings it is not good to foster,
I pushed the gate wide, she shook the bridle,
And the palfrey bounded,—and so we lost her!

XVI

When the liquor's out, why clink the cannakin? I did think to describe you the panic in 789 The redoubtable breast of our master the mannikin, And what was the pitch of his mother's yellowness, How she turned as a shark to snap the spare-rib Clean off, sailors say, from a pearl-diving Carib, When she heard, what she called, the flight of the feloness—

But it seems such child's play
What they said and did with the lady away!
And to dance on, when we've lost the music,
Always made me—and no doubt makes you—sick.
Nay, to my mind, the world's face looked so stern
As that sweet form disappeared thro' the postern,
She that kept it in constant good humour,

sor
It ought to have stopped; there seemed nothing
to do more.

But the world thought otherwise and went on, And my head 's one that its spite was spent on: Thirty years are fled since that morning, And with them all my head's adorning. Nor did the old Duchess die outright, As you expect, of suppressed spite, The natural end of every adder Not suffered to empty its poison-bladder: 810 But she and her son agreed, I take it, That no one should touch on the story to wake it, For the wound in the Duke's pride rankled fiery, So they made no search and small inquiry-And when fresh gypsies have paid us a visit, I've Noticed the couple were never inquisitive, But told them they're folks the Duke don't want here.

And bade them make haste and cross the frontier. Brief, the Duchess was gone and the Duke was glad of it

And the old one was in the young one's stead, 820 And took, in her place, the household's head, And a blessed time the household had of it!

And were I not, as a man may say, cautious

How I trench, more than needs, on the nauseous, I could favour you with sundry touches

Of the paint-smutches with which the Duchess

Heightened the mellowness of her cheek's yellowness

(To get on faster) until at last her

Cheek grew to be one master-plaster

Of mucus and fucus from mere use of ceruse

830

Till in short she grew from scalp to udder

Just the object to make you shudder!

XVII

A clean You're my friend-

breast
of it

How it gives the heart and soul a stir-up,
As if somebody broached you a glorious runlet,
And poured out all lovelily, sparkling, and sunlit,
Our green Moldavia, the streaky syrup,
Cotnar as old as the time of the Druids—
Friendship's as good as that monarch of fluids 840
To supple a dry brain, fill you its ins-and-outs,—
Gives your Life's hour-glass a shake when the
thin sand doubts

Whether to run on or stop short, and guarantees
Age is not all made of stark sloth and arrant ease!
I have seen my little Lady once more,
Jacynth, the Gypsy, Berold, and the rest of it,
For to me spoke the Duke, as I told you before;
I always wanted to make a clean breast of it,
And now it is made—why, my heart's blood,

that went trickle,
Trickle, but anon, in such muddy dribblets, 850
Is pumped up brisk now, thro' the main ventricle,
And genially floats me about the giblets!
I'll tell you what I intend to do:
I must see this fellow his sad life thro'
—He is our Duke after all,
And I, as he says, but a serf and thrall;
My father was born here and I inherit
His fame, a chain he bound his son with,—
Could I pay in a lump I should prefer it,
But there's no mine to blow up and get done with,

So I must stay till the end of the chapter:

For, as to our middle-age-manners-adapter,

86 I

THE FLIGHT OF THE DUCHESS 169

Be it a thing to be glad on or sorry on,
One day or other, his head in a morion,
And breast in a hauberk, his heels he'll kick up
Slain by some onslaught fierce of hiccup.
And then, when red doth the sword of our Duke
rust.

The arrator's plans

And its leathern sheath lies o'ergrown with a blue crust,

Then, I shall scrape together my earnings; 869
For, you see, in the Churchyard Jacynth reposes
And our children all went the way of the roses—
It's a long lane that knows no turnings—
One needs but little tackle to travel in,
So, just one stout cloak shall I indue,
And for a staff, what beats the javelin
With which his boars my father pinned you?
And then, for a purpose you shall hear presently,
Taking some Cotnar, a tight plump skinfull,
I shall go journeying, who but I, pleasantly?
Sorrow is vain and despondency sinful.

880
What's a man's age? He must hurry more, that's
all;

Cram in a day, what his youth took a year to hold; When we mind labour, then only, we're too old—What age had Methusalem when he begat Saul? And at last, as its haven some buffeted ship sees, (Come all the way from the north-parts with sperm oil)

I shall get safely out of the turmoil
And arrive one day at the land of the gypsies
And find my lady, or hear the last news of her
From some old thief and son of Lucifer,
His forehead chapletted green with wreathy hop,
Sunburned all over like an Æthiop:

what And when my Cotnar begins to operate
became And the tongue of the rogue to run at a proper rate,
And our wine-skin, tight once, shows each flaccid
dent.

I shall drop in with-as if by accident-"You never knew then, how it all ended, "What fortunes good or bad attended "The little lady your Queen befriended?" -And when that 's told me, what 's remaining? This world's too hard for my explaining-901 The same wise judge of matters equine Who still preferred some slim four-year-old To the big-boned stock of mighty Berold, And for strong Cotnar drank French weak wine, He also must be such a Lady's scorner! Smooth Jacob still robs homely Esau, Now up, now down, the world's one see-saw! -So. I shall find out some snug corner Under a hedge, like Orson the wood-knight, Turn myself round and bid the world good-night; And sleep a sound sleep till the trumpet's blowing Wakes me (unless priests cheat us laymen)
To a world where's to be no further throwing Pearls before swine that can't value them. Amen!

EARTH'S IMMORTALITIES

FAME

SEE, as the prettiest graves will do in time, Our poet's wants the freshness of its prime; Spite of the sexton's browsing horse, the sods Have struggled thro' its binding osier-rods; Headstone and half-sunk footstone lean awry, Wanting the brick-work promised by and by; How the minute grey lichens, plate o'er plate, Have softened down the crisp-cut name and date!

Two love

LOVE

So, the year's done with!

(Love me for ever!)

All March begun with,

April's endeavour;

May-wreaths that bound me

June needs must sever!

Now snows fall round me,

Quenching June's fever—

(Love me for ever!)

SONG

I

Nay but you, who do not love her,
Is she not pure gold, my mistress?
Holds earth aught—speak truth—above her?
Aught like this tress, see, and this tress,
And this last fairest tress of all,
So fair, see, ere I let it fall!

п

Because, you spend your lives in praising;
To praise, you search the wide world over;

Theoerite So, why not witness, calmly gazing,

praises
God!

If earth holds aught—speak truth—above her?

Above this tress, and this I touch
But cannot praise, I love so much!

THE BOY AND THE ANGEL

MORNING, evening, noon, and night, "Praise God," sang Theocrite.

Then to his poor trade he turned, By which the daily meal was earned.

Hard he laboured, long and well; O'er his work the boy's curls fell:

But ever, at each period, He stopped and sang, "Praise God."

Then back again his curls he threw, And cheerful turned to work anew.

Said Blaise, the listening monk, "Well done; "I doubt not thou art heard, my son:

"As well as if thy voice to-day
"Were praising God, the Pope's great way.

"This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome "Praises God from Peter's dome."

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Said Theocrite, "Would God that I Gabriel takes "Might praise Him, that great way, and die!"

Theocrite's place to the control of the control

Night passed, day shone, And Theocrite was gone.

20

With God a day endures alway, A thousand years are but a day.

God said in Heaven, "Nor day nor night "Now brings the voice of my delight."

Then Gabriel, like a rainbow's birth, Spread his wings and sank to earth;

Entered in flesh, the empty cell, Lived there, and played the craftsman well:

And morning, evening, noon, and night, Praised God in place of Theocrite.

30

And from a boy, to youth he grew: The man put off the stripling's hue:

The man matured and fell away Into the season of decay:

And ever o'er the trade he bent, And ever lived on earth content.

(He did God's will; to him, all one If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said, "A praise is in mine ear; "There is no doubt in it, no fear:

Pope Theocrite

"So sing old worlds, and so

"New worlds that from my footstool go.

"Clearer loves sound other ways:

"I miss my little human praise."

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off fell The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'Twas Easter Day: he flew to Rome, And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

In the tiring-room close by The great outer gallery,

With his holy vestments dight, Stood the new Pope, Theocrite:

And all his past career Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade, Till on his life the sickness weighed;

And in his cell, when death drew near, An angel in a dream brought cheer:

And rising from the sickness drear He grew a priest, and now stood here.

To the East with praise he turned, And on his sight the angel burned.

"I bore thee from thy craftman's cell, And set thee here; I did not well.

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50

"Vainly I left my angel's-sphere,
"Vain was thy dream of many a year.

His end at home

- Thy voice's praise seemed weak; it dropped—
- "Creation's chorus stopped!
- "Go back and praise again
- "The early way-while I remain.

70

- "With that weak voice of our disdain,
- "Take up Creation's pausing strain.
- "Back to the cell and poor employ: "Become the craftsman and the boy!"

Theocrite grew old at home; A new Pope dwelt in Peter's Dome.

One vanished as the other died: They sought God side by side.

MEETING AT NIGHT

ī

THE grey sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed in the slushy sand.

п

Meeting and parting Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!

PARTING AT MORNING

ROUND the cape of a sudden came the sea, And the sun looked over the mountain's rim— And straight was a path of gold for him, And the need of a world of men for me.

SAUL

Sam Abner, "At last thou art come!
"Ere I tell, ere thou speak,—
"Kiss my cheek, wish me well!" Then I
wished it,
And did kiss his cheek:
And he, "Since the King, oh my friend,
"For thy countenance sent,

Nor drunken nor eaten have we; Nor, until from his tent Thou return with the joyful assurance
The king liveth yet,
Shall our lip with the honey be brightened,
—The water, be wet.

What Abner 10 said— David prays

"For out of the black mid-tent's silence,
A space of three days,
No sound hath escaped to thy servants,
Of prayer nor of praise,
To betoken that Saul and the Spirit
Have ended their strife,
And that faint in his triumph the monarch
Sinks back upon life.

20

"Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved!
God's child, with his dew
On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies
Still living and blue

As thou brak st them to twine round thy harp-strings, As if no wild heat

Were raging to torture the desert!"
Then I, as was meet,

Knelt down to the God of my fathers, And rose on my feet,

And ran o'er the sand burnt to powder. The tent was unlooped;

I pulled up the spear that obstructed, And under I stooped;

Hands and knees o'er the slippery grass-patch— All withered and gone—

That leads to the second enclosure,

I groped my way on,
Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open;

Then once more I prayed,

40

Saul's And opened the foldskirts and entered, And was not afraid: And spoke, "Here is David, thy servant!" And no voice replied; And first I saw nought but the blackness; But soon I descried A something more black than the blackness -The vast, the upright Main-prop which sustains the pavilion,-And slow into sight Grew a figure, gigantic, against it, And blackest of all :--Then a sunbeam, that burst thro' the tent-roof, Showed Saul. He stood as erect as that tent-prop; Both arms stretched out wide On the great cross-support in the centre That goes to each side: So he bent not a muscle, but hung there As, caught in his pangs And waiting his change, the king-serpent All heavily hangs, Far away from his kind, in the pine, Till deliverance come With the Spring-time,—so agonized Saul, Drear and stark, blind and dumb.

Then I tuned my harp,—took off the lilies
We twine round its chords
Least they snap 'neath the stress of the noontide
—Those sunbeams like swords!
And I first played the tune all our sheep know,
As, one after one,

50

So docile they come to the pen-door	David
Till folding be done;	harps
-They are white and untorn by the bushes,	
For lo, they have fed	
Where the long grasses stifle the water	
Within the stream's bed:	
How one after one seeks its lodging,	
A C 11	Во
Into eve and the blue far above us,	
-So blue and so far!	
Then the tune for which quails on the cornland	•
Will leave each his mate	
To follow the player; then, what makes	*
The crickets elate	
Till for boldness they fight one another:	
And then, what has weight	
To set the quick jerboa a-musing	
Out of the 15th county to come	90
—There are none such as he for a wonder—	
Half bird and half mouse!	
—God made all the creatures and gave them	
Our love and our fear,	
To show, we and they are his children,	
One family here.	
,	

Then I played the help-tune of our reapers,
Their wine-song, when hand
Grasps hand, eye lights eye in good friendship,
And great hearts expand,
And grow one in the sense of this world's life;
And then, the low song
When the dead man is praised on his journey—
"Bear, bear him along

Saul	6
groans and	
shudders	

"With his few faults shut up like dead flowrets;
"Are balm-seeds not here

"To console us? The land is left none such "As he on the bier—

"Oh, would we might keep thee, my brother!"
And then, the glad chaunt

Of the marriage,—first go the young maidens, Next, she whom we vaunt

As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling: And then, the great march

When man runs to man to assist him, And buttress an arch

Nought can break., who shall harm them, our friends?

Then, the chorus intoned

As the Levites go up to the altar
In glory enthroned—

But I stopped here for here in the darkness

But I stopped here—for here, in the darkness, Saul groaned.

And I paused, held my breath in such silence!

And listened apart;

And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shuddered,— And sparkles 'gan dart

From the jewels that woke in his turban

—At once with a start

All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies Courageous at heart;

So the head—but the body still moved not, Still hung there erect.

And I bent once again to my playing, Pursued it unchecked,

As I sang, 'Oh, our manhood's prime vigour!

No spirit feels waste,

No muscle is stopped in its playing, No sinew unbraced;—		David sings to the harp
And the wild joys of living! The leaping		
From rock up to rock— The rending their boughs from the palm-trees,-	140 —	
The cool silver shock		
Of a plunge in the pool's living water— The haunt of the bear,		
And the sultriness showing the lion		
Is couched in his lair:		
And the meal—the rich dates—yellowed over		
With gold dust divine,		
And the locust's flesh steeped in the pitcher,		
The full draught of wine,	150	
And the sleep in the dried river channel Where tall rushes tell		
— .		
The water was wont to go warbling		
So softly and well,—		
How good is man's life here, mere living!		
How fit to employ The heart and the soul and the senses		
For ever in joy!		
Hast thou loved the white locks of thy father		
Whose sword thou didst guard	160	
When he trusted thee forth to the wolf hunt		
For glorious reward?		
Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother		
Held up, as men sung		
The song of the nearly-departed,		
And heard her faint tongue		
Joining in while it could to the witness		
"Let one more attest,		
"I have lived, seen God's hand thro' that lifeti	me,	
"And all was for best"	170	

He apostro phises Saul by name Then they sung thro' their tears, in strong triumph, Not much,—but the rest!

And thy brothers—the help and the contest,

The working whence grew

Such result, as from seething grape-bundles
The spirit so true:

And the friends of thy boyhood—that boyhood With wonder and hope,

Present promise, and wealth in the future,—
The eye's eagle scope,—

180

Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch, A people is thine!

Oh all gifts the world offers singly,
On one head combine.

On one head the joy and the pride, Even rage like the throe

That opes the rock, helps its glad labour, And lets the gold go—

And ambition that sees a sun lead it— Oh, all of these—all

Combine to unite in one creature
—Saul!

END OF PART THE FIRST

TIME'S REVENGES

I've a Friend, over the sea;
I like him, but he loves me;
It all grew out of the books I write;
They find such favour in his sight

That he slaughters you with savage looks Because you don't admire my books: He does himself though, -and if some vein Were to snap to-night in this heavy brain, To-morrow month, if I lived to try, Round should I just turn quietly, Or out of the bedclothes stretch my hand Till I found him, come from his foreign land To be my nurse in this poor place, And make me broth, and wash my face, And light my fire, and, all the while, Bear with his old good-humoured smile That I told him "Better have kept away "Than come and kill me, night and day, "With worse than fever's throbs and shoots, "At the creaking of his clumsy boots." I am as sure that this he would do. As that Saint Paul's is striking Two: And I think I had rather . . woe is me! -Yes, rather see him than not see, If lifting a hand would seat him there Before me in the empty chair To-night, when my head aches indeed, And I can neither think, nor read, And these blue fingers will not hold The pen; this garret's freezing cold!

An enthusiastic friend

to

20

30

And I 've a Lady—There he wakes, The laughing fiend and prince of snakes Within me, at her name, to pray Fate send some creature in the way Of my love for her, to be down-torn Upthrust and onward borne

40

60

So I might prove myself that sea heartless Of passion which I needs must be! Call my thoughts false and my fancies quaint, And my style infirm, and its figures faint, All the critics say, and more blame yet, And not one angry word you get! But, please you, wonder I would put My cheek beneath that Lady's foot Rather than trample under mine The laurels of the Florentine. And you shall see how the Devil spends A fire God gave for other ends! I tell you, I stride up and down This garret, crowned with love's best crown. And feasted with love's perfect feast, To think I kill for her, at least, Body and soul and peace and fame, Alike youth's end and manhood's aim, -So is my spirit, as flesh with sin, Filled full, eaten out and in With the face of her, the eyes of her, The lips and little chin, the stir Of shadow round her mouth; and she —I'll tell you,—calmly would decree That I should roast at a slow fire. If that would compass her desire And make her one whom they invite To the famous ball to-morrow night.

> There may be Heaven; there must be Hell; Meantime, there is our Earth here—well!

œ

THE GLOVE

(PETER RONSARD loquitur)

"Нвібно," yawned one day King Francis, "Distance all value enhances! "When a man's busy, why, leisure "Strikes him as wonderful pleasure,-"'Faith, and at leisure once is he? "Straightway he wants to be busy. "Here we've got peace; and aghast I'm "Caught thinking war the true pastime!. "Is there a reason in metre? "Give us your speech, master Peter!" I who, if mortal dare say so, Ne'er am at loss with my Naso, "Sire," I replied, "joys prove cloudlets: "Men are the merest Ixions"-Here the King whistled aloud, "Let's ".. Heigho .. go look at our lions!" Such are the sorrowful chances

If you talk fine to King Francis.

King Francis unappreciative

And so, to the courtyard proceeding,
Our company, Francis was leading,
Increased by new followers tenfold
Before he arrived at the penfold;
Lords, ladies, like clouds which bedizen
At sunset the western horizon.
And Sir De Lorge pressed 'mid the foremost
With the dame he professed to adore most—

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Oh, what a face! One by fits eyed Lion's den Her, and the horrible pitside; For the penfold surrounded a hollow Which led where the eye scarce dared follow, 30 And shelved to the chamber secluded Where Bluebeard, the great lion, brooded. The King hailed his keeper, an Arab As glossy and black as a scarab, And bade him make sport and at once stir Up and out of his den the old monster. They opened a hole in the wire-work Across it, and dropped there a firework, And fled; one's heart's beating redoubled; A pause, while the pit's mouth was troubled, The blackness and silence so utter. By the firework's slow sparkling and sputter: Then earth in a sudden contortion Gave out to our gaze her abortion! Such a brute! Were I friend Clement Marot (Whose experience of nature's but narrow. And whose faculties move in no small mist When he versifies David the Psalmist) I should study that brute to describe you Illum Juda Leonem de Tribu! 50 One's whole blood grew curdling and creepy To see the black mane, vast and heapy, The tail in the air stiff and straining, The wide eyes, nor waxing nor waning, As over the barrier which bounded His platform, and us who surrounded The barrier, they reached and they rested On the space that might stand him in best stead:

For who knew, he thought, what the amazement, The dame The eruption of clatter and blaze meant, And if, in this minute of wonder, No outlet, 'mid lightning and thunder, Lay broad, and, his shackles all shivered, The lion at last was delivered? Ay, that was the open sky o'erhead! And you saw by the flash on his forehead, By the hope in those eyes wide and steady, He was leagues in the desert already, Driving the flocks up the mountain, Or catlike couched hard by the fountain 70 To waylay the date-gathering negress: So guarded he entrance or egress. "How he stands!" quoth the King: "we may well swear, "No novice, we've won our spurs elsewhere, "And so can afford the confession. "We exercise wholesome discretion

"In keeping aloof from his threshold;
"Once hold you, those jaws want no fresh hold,
"Their first would too pleasantly purloin

"The visitor's brisket or surloin:

"But who's he would prove so fool-hardy?"
Not the best man of Marignan, pardie!"

The sentence no sooner was uttered,
Than over the rails a glove fluttered,
Fell close to the lion, and rested:
The dame 'twas, who flung it and jested
With life so, De Lorge had been wooing
For months past; he sate there pursuing
His suit, weighing out with nonchalance
Fine speeches like gold from a balance.

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90

insults

De Lorge Sound the trumpet, no true knight's a tarrier! De Lorge made one leap at the barrier, Walked straight to the glove, -while the lion Ne'er moved, kept his far-reaching eye on The palm-tree-edged desert-spring's sapphire, And the musky oiled skin of the Kaffir,-Picked it up, and as calmly retreated, Leaped back where the lady was seated, And full in the face of its owner Flung the glove-

99

"Your heart's queen, you dethrone her? "So should I"-cried the King-"twas mere vanity, "Not love, set that task to humanity!" Lords and ladies alike turned with loathing From such a proved wolf in sheep's clothing. Not so, I; for I caught an expression In her brow's undisturbed self-possession Amid the Court's scoffing and merriment,-As if from no pleasing experiment She rose, yet of pain not much heedful So long as the process was needful-TIO As if she had tried in a crucible. To what "speeches like gold" were reducible, And, finding the finest prove copper, Felt the smoke in her face was but proper; To know what she had not to trust to. Was worth all the ashes, and dust too. She went out 'mid hooting and laughter; Clement Marot stayed; I followed after, And asked, as a grace, what it all meant-If she wished not the rash deed's recalment? "For I"—so I spoke—"am a Poet: "Human nature, -behoves that I know it!"

She told me, "Too long had I heard "Of the deed proved alone by the word:-"For my love,---what De Lorge would not dare! "With my scorn-what De Lorge could compare! "And the endless descriptions of death "He would brave when my lip formed a breath, "I must reckon as braved, or, of course, "Doubt his word-and moreover, perforce, "For such gifts as no lady could spurn, "Must offer my love in return. "When I looked on your lion, it brought "All the dangers at once to my thought, "Encountered by all sorts of men, "Before he was lodged in his den,-"From the poor slave whose club or bare hands "Dug the trap, set the snare on the sands, "With no King and no Court to applaud, "By no shame, should he shrink, overawed, "Yet to capture the creature made shift, "That his rude boys might laugh at the gift, "To the page who last leaped o'er the fence "Of the pit, on no greater pretence "Than to get back the bonnet he dropped, "Lest his pay for a week should be stopped-"So, wiser I judged it to make "One trial what 'death for my sake' "Really meant, while the power was yet mine, "Than to wait until time should define 150 "Such a phrase not so simply as I, "Who took it to mean just 'to die.' "The blow a glove gives is but weak-"Does the mark yet discolour my cheek?

"But when the heart suffers a blow,

"Will the pain pass so soon, do you know?" Digitized by Google

I looked, as away she was sweeping, marriage And saw a youth eagerly keeping As close as he dared to the doorway: No doubt that a noble should more weigh 160 His life than befits a plebeian; And yet, had our brute been Nemean-(I judge by a certain calm fervor The youth stepped with, forward to serve her) -He'd have scarce thought you did him the worst turn If you whispered "Friend, what you'd get, first And when, shortly after, she carried Her shame from the Court, and they married, To that marriage some happiness, maugre The voice of the Court, I dared augur. 170

> For De Lorge, he made women with men vie, Those in wonder and praise, these in envy; And in short stood so plain a head taller That he wooed and won . . How do you call her? The beauty, that rose in the sequel To the King's love, who loved her a week well: And 'twas noticed he never would honour De Lorge (who looked daggers upon her) With the easy commission of stretching His legs in the service, and fetching 180 His wife, from her chamber, those straying Sad gloves she was always mislaying, While the King took the closet to chat in,-But of course this adventure came pat in; And never the King told the story, How bringing a glove brought such glory.

But the wife smiled — " His nerves are grown firmer—

Attack approaching disease!

"Mine he brings now and utters no murmur!"

Venienti occurrite morbo!
With which moral I drop my theorbo.

CHRISTMAS-EVE

AND

EASTER-DAY

CHRISTMAS-EVE AND EASTER-DAY

CHRISTMAS-EVE

1

Our of the little chapel I burst Into the fresh night air again. I had waited a good five minutes first In the doorway, to escape the rain That drove in gusts down the common's centre, At the edge of which the chapel stands, Before I plucked up heart to enter: Heaven knows how many sorts of hands Reached past me, groping for the latch Of the inner door that hung on catch, More obstinate the more they fumbled, Till, giving way at last with a scold Of the crazy hinge, in squeezed or tumbled One sheep more to the rest in fold, And left me irresolute, standing sentry In the sheepfold's lath-and-plaster entry, Four feet long by two feet wide, Partitioned off from the vast inside— I blocked up half of it at least. No remedy; the rain kept driving:

The chapel

195

196 CHRISTMAS-EVE AND EASTER-DAY

The con- They eyed me much as some wild beast, gregation That congregation, still arriving, Some of them by the mainroad, white A long way past me into the night, Skirting the common, then diverging; Not a few suddenly emerging From the common's self thro' the paling-gaps,--They house in the gravel-pits perhaps, Where the road stops short with its safeguard border

> Of lamps, as tired of such disorder;— 30 But the most turned in yet more abruptly From a certain squalid knot of alleys, Where the town's bad blood once slept corruptly, Which now the little chapel rallies And leads into day again,—its priestliness Lending itself to hide their beastliness So cleverly (thanks in part to the mason), And putting so cheery a whitewashed face on Those neophytes too much in lack of it, That, where you cross the common as I did, And meet the party thus presided, "Mount Zion," with Love-lane at the back of it, They front you as little disconcerted, As, bound for the hills, her fate averted And her wicked people made to mind him, Lot might have marched with Gomorrah behind him.

> > 11

Well, from the road, the lanes or the common, In came the flock: the fat weary woman,

Panting and bewildered, down-clapping Her umbrella with a mighty report, Grounded it by me, wry and flapping, A wreck of whalebones; then, with a snort, Like a startled horse, at the interloper Who humbly knew himself improper, But could not shrink up small enough, Round to the door, and in,-the gruff Hinge's invariable scold Making your very blood run cold. Prompt in the wake of her, up-pattered On broken clogs, the many-tattered Little old-faced, peaking sister-turned-mother Of the sickly babe she tried to smother Somehow up, with its spotted face, From the cold, on her breast, the one warm place;

She too must stop, wring the poor suds dry
Of a draggled shawl, and add thereby
Her tribute to the door-mat, sopping
Already from my own clothes' dropping,
Which yet she seemed to grudge I should stand
on:

Then stooping down to take off her pattens, She bore them defiantly, in each hand one, Planted together before her breast And its babe, as good as a lance in rest. Close on her heels, the dingy satins Of a female something, past me flitted, With lips as much too white, as a streak Lay far too red on each hollow cheek; And it seemed the very door-hinge pitied All that was left of a woman once, Holding at least its tongue for the nonce.

Womencharacters

60

70

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198 CHRISTMAS EVE AND EASTER DAY

ness of

Exclusive- Then a tall yellow man, like the Penitent Thief, With his jaw bound up in a handkerchief, And eyelids screwed together tight, Led himself in by some inner light. And, except from him, from each that entered, I had the same interrogation-"What, you, the alien, you have ventured "To take with us, elect, your station? "A carer for none of it, a Gallio?"-Thus, plain as print, I read the glance 90 At a common prey, in each countenance, As of huntsman giving his hounds the tallyho: And, when the door's cry drowned their wonder, The draught, it always sent in shutting, Made the flame of the single tallow candle In the cracked square lanthorn I stood under, Shoot its blue lip at me, rebutting, As it were, the luckless cause of scandal: I verily thought the zealous light (In the chapel's secret, too!) for spite, 100 Would shudder itself clean off the wick. With the air of a St. John's Candlestick. There was no standing it much longer. "Good folks," said I, as resolve grew stronger, "This way you perform the Grand-Inquisitor, "When the weather sends you a chance visitor? "You are the men, and wisdom shall die with

"And none of the old Seven Churches vie with you!

"But still, despite the pretty perfection 109 "To which you carry your trick of exclusiveness,

"And, taking God's word under wise protection,

"Correct its tendency to diffusiveness,

"Bidding one reach it over hot ploughshares,-"Still, as I say, though you've found salvation,

"If I should choose to cry—as now—'Shares!'—

"See if the best of you bars me my ration!

"Because I prefer for my expounder

"Of the laws of the feast, the feast's own Founder:

"Mine's the same right with your poorest and sickliest.

"Supposing I don the marriage-vestiment;

"So, shut your mouth, and open your Testament,

"And carve me my portion at your quickliest!"

Accordingly, as a shoemaker's lad With wizened face in want of soap,

And wet apron wound round his waist like a rope, After stopping outside, for his cough was bad,

To get the fit over, poor gentle creature, And so avoid disturbing the preacher,

Passed in, I sent my elbow spikewise At the shutting door, and entered likewise,-

Received the hinge's accustomed greeting,

Crossed the threshold's magic pentacle, And found myself in full conventicle,

-To wit, in Zion Chapel Meeting, On the Christmas-Eve of 'Forty-nine,

Which, calling its flock to their special clover, Found them assembled and one sheep over,

Whose lot, as the weather pleased, was mine.

111

I very soon had enough of it. The hot smell and the human noises, And my neighbour's coat, the greasy cuff of it, Were a pebble-stone that a child's hand poises,

200 CHRISTMAS-EVE AND EASTER-DAY

"The stupidity'

Compared with the pig-of-lead-like pressure preaching. Of the preaching-man's immense stupidity, immense As he poured his doctrine forth, full measure, To meet his audience's avidity. You needed not the wit of the Sibyl To guess the cause of it all, in a twinkling-No sooner had our friend an inkling Of treasure hid in the Holy Bible, (Whenever it was the thought first struck him How Death, at unawares, might duck him Deeper than the grave, and quench The gin-shop's light in Hell's grim drench) Than he handled it so, in fine irreverence, As to hug the Book of books to pieces: And, a patchwork of chapters and texts in severance,

150

Not improved by the private dog's-ears and creases, Having clothed his own soul with, he'd fain see equipt yours,-

So tossed you again your Holy Scriptures. 160 And you picked them up, in a sense, no doubt: Nay, had but a single face of my neighbours Appeared to suspect that the preacher's labours Were help which the world could be saved without, 'Tis odds but I had borne in quiet A qualm or two at my spiritual diet; Or, who can tell? had even mustered Somewhat to urge in behalf of the sermon: But the flock sate on, divinely flustered, Sniffing, methought, its dew of Hermon 170 With such content in every snuffle, As the devil inside us loves to ruffle. My old fat woman purred with pleasure, And thumb round thumb went twirling faster,

While she, to his periods keeping measure, Maternally devoured the pastor. The man with the handerchief, untied it, Showed us a horrible wen inside it, Gave his eyelids yet another screwing, And rocked himself as the woman was doing. 180 The shoemaker's lad, discreetly choking, Kept down his cough. 'Twas too provoking! My gorge rose at the nonsense and stuff of it, And saying, like Eve when she plucked the apple, "I wanted a taste, and now there's enough of it," I flung out of the little chapel.

The intruder bolts

I

There was a lull in the rain, a lull In the wind too; the moon was risen, And would have shone out pure and full, But for the ramparted cloud-prison, Block on block built up in the west, For what purpose the wind knows best, Who changes his mind continually. And the empty other half of the sky Seemed in its silence as if it knew What, any moment, might look through A chance-gap in that fortress massy:-Through its fissures you got hints Of the flying moon, by the shifting tints, Now, a dull lion-colour, now, brassy Burning to yellow, and whitest yellow, Like furnace-smoke just ere the flames bellow, All a-simmer with intense strain To let her through,—then blank again,

Reflexions on the sermon

At the hope of her appearance failing. Just by the chapel, a break in the railing Shows a narrow path directly across: 'Tis ever dry walking there, on the moss-Besides, you go gently all the way uphill: I stooped under and soon felt better: 210 My head grew light, my limbs more supple, As I walked on, glad to have slipt the fetter; My mind was full of the scene I had left, That placid flock, that pastor vociferant, -How this outside was pure and different! The sermon, now-what a mingled weft Of good and ill! were either less, Its fellow had coloured the whole distinctly; But alas for the excellent earnestness. And the truths, quite true if stated succinctly, But as surely false, in their quaint presentment, However to pastor and flock's contentment! Say rather, such truths looked false to your eyes, With his provings and parallels twisted and twined,

Till how could you know them, grown double their size,

In the natural fog of the good man's mind? Like yonder spots of our roadside lamps, Haloed about with the common's damps. Truth remains true, the fault's in the prover; The zeal was good, and the aspiration; And yet, and yet, yet, fifty times over, Pharaoh received no demonstration By his Baker's dream of Baskets Three, Of the doctrine of the Trinity,—Although, as our preacher thus embellished it, Apparently his hearers relished it

With so unfeigned a gust—who knows if
They did not prefer our friend to Joseph?
But so it is everywhere, one way with all of them!
These people have really felt, no doubt,
A something, the motion they style the Call of

Calls and Revivals

them: And this is their method of bringing about, By a mechanism of words and tones, (So many texts in so many groans) A sort of reviving or reproducing, More or less perfectly, (who can tell?—) Of the mood itself, that strengthens by using; And how it happens, I understand well. A tune was born in my head last week, Out of the thump-thump and shriek-shriek Of the train, as I came by it, up from Manchester; And when, next week, I take it back again, My head will sing to the engine's clack again, While it only makes my neighbour's haunches stir, -Finding no dormant musical sprout In him, as in me, to be jolted out. 'Tis the taught already that profit by teaching; He gets no more from the railway's preaching, Than, from this preacher who does the rail's office, I,

Whom therefore the flock casts a jealous eye on. 260 Still, why paint over their door "Mount Zion," To which all flesh shall come, saith the prophecy?

v

But wherefore be harsh on a single case? After how many modes, this Christmas-Eve,

The poet's Does the selfsame weary thing take place? and God's The same endeavour to make you believe, And much with the same effect, no more: Each method abundantly convincing, As I say, to those convinced before, But scarce to be swallowed without wincing, By the not-as-yet-convinced. For me, I have my own church equally. And in this church my faith sprang first! (I said, as I reached the rising ground, And the wind began again, with a burst Of rain in my face, and a glad rebound From the heart beneath, as if, God speeding me, I entered His church-door, Nature leading me) -In youth I looked to these very skies, And probing their immensities, 280 I found God there, His visible power; Yet felt in my heart, amid all its sense Of that power, an equal evidence That His love, there too, was the nobler dower. For the loving worm within its clod, Were diviner than a loveless god Amid his worlds, I will dare to say. You know what I mean: God's all, man's nought: But also, God, whose pleasure brought Man into being, stands away As it were, an handbreadth off, to give Room for the newly-made to live, And look at Him from a place apart, And use His gifts of brain and heart,

Given, indeed, but to keep for ever. Who speaks of man, then, must not sever

Saying, "But all is God's"-whose plan

Man's very elements from man,

Was to create man and then leave him Able, His own word saith, to grieve Him, But able to glorify Him too, As a mere machine could never do. That prayed or praised, all unaware Of its fitness for aught but praise and prayer, Made perfect as a thing of course. Man, therefore, stands on his own stock Of love and power as a pin-point rock, And, looking to God who ordained divorce Of the rock from His boundless continent, Sees in His Power made evident, Only excess by a million fold O'er the power God gave man in the mould. For, see: Man's hand, first formed to carry A few pounds' weight, when taught to marry Its strength with an engine's, lifts a mountain, -Advancing in power by one degree; And why count steps through eternity? But Love is the ever springing fountain: Man may enlarge or narrow his bed For the water's play, but the water head-How can he multiply or reduce it? As easy create it, as cause it to cease: He may profit by it, or abuse it; But 'tis not a thing to bear increase As power will: be love less or more In the heart of man, he keeps it shut Or opes it wide as he pleases, but Love's sum remains what it was before. So, gazing up, in my youth, at love As seen through power, ever above All modes which make it manifest, My soul brought all to a single testPower and Love

310

320

Love the That He, the Eternal First and Last, sole good Who, in His power, had so surpassed All man conceives of what is might,-Whose wisdom, too, showed infinite, -Would prove as infinitely good; Would never, my soul understood, With power to work all love desires, Bestow e'en less than man requires: 340 That He who endlessly was teaching, Above my spirit's utmost reaching, What love can do in the leaf or stone, (So that to master this alone, This done in the stone or leaf for me, I must go on learning endlessly) Would never need that I, in turn, Should point him out a defect unheeded, And show that God had yet to learn What the meanest human creature needed,— -Not life, to wit, for a few short years, Tracking His way through doubts and fears, While the stupid earth on which I stay Suffers no change, but passive adds Its myriad years to myriads, Though I, He gave it to, decay, Seeing death come and choose about me, And my dearest ones depart without me. No! love which, on earth, amid all the shows of it.

Has ever been seen the sole good of life in it, 360 The love, ever growing there, spite of the strife in it.

Shall arise, made perfect, from death's repose of it! And I shall behold Thee, face to face, O God, and in Thy light retrace How in all I loved here, still wast Thou!
Whom pressing to, then, as I fain would now,
I shall find as able to satiate
The love, Thy gift, as my spirit's wonder
Thou art able to quicken and sublimate,
With this sky of Thine, that I now walk under,
And glory in Thee as thus I gaze,
—Thus, thus! oh, let men keep their ways
Of seeking Thee in a narrow shrine—
Be this my way! And this is mine!

A lunar

VI

For lo, what think you? suddenly The rain and the wind ceased, and the sky Received at once the full fruition Of the moon's consummate apparition. The black cloud-barricade was riven, Ruined beneath her feet, and driven Deep in the west; while, bare and breathless, North and south and east lay ready For a glorious Thing, that, dauntless, deathless, Sprang across them, and stood steady. 'Twas a moon-rainbow, vast and perfect, From heaven to heaven extending, perfect As the mother-moon's self, full in face. It rose, distinctly at the base With its seven proper colours chorded, Which still, in the rising, were compressed, Until at last they coalesced, And supreme the spectral creature lorded In a triumph of whitest white,-Above which intervened the night.

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400

AIO

420

Another But above night too, like the next, rainbow The second of a wondrous sequence, Reaching in rare and rarer frequence, Till the heaven of heavens be circumflext. Another rainbow rose, a mightier, Fainter, flushier, and flightier,-Rapture dying along its verge! Oh, whose foot shall I see emerge, WHOSE, from the straining topmost dark, On to the keystone of that arc?

This sight was shown me, there and then,-Me, one out of a world of men, Singled forth, as the chance might hap To another, if in a thunderclap Where I heard noise, and you saw flame, Some one man knew God called his name. For me, I think I said, "Appear! "Good were it to be ever here. "If Thou wilt, let me build to Thee "Service-tabernacles Three, "Where, for ever in Thy presence, "In extatic acquiescence, " Far alike from thriftless learning "And ignorance's undiscerning, "I may worship and remain! Thus, at the show above me, gazing With upturned eyes, I felt my brain Glutted with the glory, blazing Throughout its whole mass, over and under, Until at length it burst asunder,

CHRISTMAS-EVE

200

And out of it bodily there streamed The too-much glory, as it seemed, Passing from out me to the ground, Then palely serpentining round Into the dark with mazy error. Christ

VIII

All at once I looked up with terror. He was there. He Himself with His human air, On the narrow pathway, just before: I saw the back of Him, no more-He had left the chapel, then, as I. I forgot all about the sky. No face: only the sight Of a sweepy Garment, vast and white, With a hem that I could recognise. I felt terror, no surprise: My mind filled with the cataract, At one bound, of the mighty fact. I remembered, He did say Doubtless, that, to this world's end, Where two or three should meet and pray, He would be in the midst, their Friend: Certainly He was there with them. And my pulses leaped for joy Of the golden thought without alloy, That I saw His very Vesture's hem. Then rushed the blood back, cold and clear With a fresh enhancing shiver of fear, And I hastened, cried out while I pressed To the salvation of the Vest,

430

440

A prayer "But not so, Lord! It cannot be "That Thou, indeed, art leaving me-"Me, that have despised Thy friends. "Did my heart make no amends? "Thou art the Love of God-above "His Power, didst hear me place His Love, "And that was leaving the world for Thee! "Therefore Thou must not turn from me "As if I had chosen the other part. "Folly and pride o'ercame my heart. "Our best is bad, nor bears Thy test; "Still it should be our very best. "I thought it best that Thou, the Spirit, "Be worshipped in spirit and in truth, "And in beauty, as even we require it-"Not in the forms burlesque, uncouth, "I left but now, as scarcely fitted "For Thee: I knew not what I pitied: "But, all I felt there, right or wrong, "What is it to Thee, who curest sinning? "Am I not weak as Thou art strong? "I have looked to Thee from the beginning, "Straight up to Thee through all the world "Which, like an idle scroll, lay furled "To nothingness on either side: "And since the time Thou wast descried, 480 "Spite of the weak heart, so have I "Lived ever, and so fain would die, "Living and dying, Thee before!

"But if Thou leavest me-"

IX

Less or more, I suppose that I spoke thus. When,-have mercy, Lord, on us! The whole Face turned upon me full. And I spread myself beneath it, As when the bleacher spreads, to seethe it In the cleansing sun, his wool,-490 Steeps in the flood of noontide whiteness Some defiled, discoloured web-So lay I, saturate with brightness. And when the flood appeared to ebb, Lo, I was walking, light and swift, With my senses settling fast and steadying, But my body caught up in the whirl and drift Of the Vesture's amplitude, still eddying On, just before me, still to be followed, As it carried me after with its motion: 500 What shall I say ?---as a path were hollowed And a man went weltering through the ocean, Sucked along in the flying wake Of the luminous water-snake. Darkness and cold were cloven, as through I passed, upborne yet walking too. And I turned to myself at intervals,— "So He said, and so it befals. "God who registers the cup "Of mere cold water, for His sake 510 "To a disciple rendered up, "Disdains not His own thirst to slake "At the poorest love was ever offered:

"And because it was my heart I proffered,

Caught up by Christ

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to Rome

"With true love trembling at the brim,

the world "He suffers me to follow Him

"For ever, my own way,-dispensed

"From seeking to be influenced

"By all the less immediate ways

"That earth, in worships manifold,

"Adopts to reach, by prayer and praise,

"The Garment's hem, which, lo, I hold!"

x

520

And so we crossed the world and stopped. For where am I, in city or plain, Since I am 'ware of the world again? And what is this that rises propped With pillars of prodigious girth? Is it really on the earth, This miraculous Dome of God? Has the angel's measuring-rod Which numbered cubits, gem from gem, 'Twixt the gates of the New Jerusalem. Meted it out, - and what he meted, Have the sons of men completed? -Binding, ever as he bade, Columns in this colonnade With arms wide open to embrace The entry of the human race To the breast of . . . what is it, you building, Ablaze in front, all paint and gilding, With marble for brick, and stones of price For garniture of the edifice? Now I see: it is no dream: It stands there and it does not seem:

For ever, in pictures, thus it looks, St. Peter's And thus I have read of it in books, Often in England, leagues away, And wondered how those fountains play, Growing up eternally Each to a musical water-tree, 550 Whose blossoms drop, a glittering boon, Before my eyes, in the light of the moon, To the granite lavers underneath. Liar and dreamer in your teeth! I, the sinner that speak to you, Was in Rome this night, and stood, and knew Both this and more! For see, for see, The dark is rent, mine eye is free To pierce the crust of the outer wall, And I view inside, and all there, all, 560 As the swarming hollow of a hive, The whole Basilica alive! Men in the chancel, body, and nave, Men on the pillars' architrave, Men on the statues, men on the tombs With popes and kings in their porphyry wombs, All famishing in expectation Of the main-altar's consummation. For see, for see, the rapturous moment Approaches, and earth's best endowment 570 Blends with heaven's: the taper-fires Pant up, the winding brazen spires Heave loftier yet the baldachin; The incense-gaspings, long kept in, Suspire in clouds; the organ blatant Holds his breath and grovels latent, As if God's hushing finger grazed him,

(Like Behemoth when He praised him)

580

590

600

Christ At the silver bell's shrill tinkling, inside— Quick cold drops of terror sprinkling outside On the sudden pavement strewed With faces of the multitude. Earth breaks up, time drops away, In flows heaven, with its new day Of endless life, when He who trod, Very Man and very God, This earth in weakness, shame and pain, Dying the death whose signs remain Up yonder on the accursed tree,— Shall come again, no more to be Of captivity the thrall, But the one God, all in all, King of kings, and Lord of lords, As His servant John received the words. "I died, and live for evermore!"

XI

Yet I was left outside the door.
Why sate I there on the threshold-stone,
Left till He returns, alone
Save for the Garment's extreme fold
Abandoned still to bless my hold?—
My reason, to my doubt, replied,
As if a book were opened wide,
And at a certain page I traced
Every record undefaced,
Added by successive years,—
The harvestings of truth's stray ears
Singly gleaned, and in one sheaf
Bound together for belief.

Why outside? Yes, I said—that He will go And sit with these in turn, I know. Their faith's heart beats, though her head swims Too giddily to guide her limbs, Disabled by their palsy-stroke From propping me. Though Rome's gross yoke Drops off, no more to be endured, Her teaching is not so obscured By errors and perversities, That no truth shines athwart the lies: And He, whose eye detects a spark Even where, to man's, the whole seems dark, 620 May well see flame where each beholder Acknowledges the embers smoulder. But I, a mere man, fear to quit The clue God gave me as most fit To guide my footsteps through life's maze, Because Himself discerns all ways Open to reach Him: I, a man He gave to mark where faith began To swerve aside, till from its summit Judgment drops her damning plummet, 630 Pronouncing such a fatal space Departed from the Founder's base: He will not bid me enter too, But rather sit, as now I do, Awaiting His return outside. -'Twas thus my reason straight replied, And joyously I turned, and pressed The Garment's skirt upon my breast, Until, afresh its light suffusing me, My heart cried,—what has been abusing me 640 That I should wait here lonely and coldly, Instead of rising, entering boldly,

Intellect Baring truth's face, and letting drift dethroned Her veils of lies as they choose to shift? Do these men praise Him? I will raise My voice up to their point of praise! I see the error; but above The scope of error, see the love.— Oh, love of those first Christian days! -Fanned so soon into a blaze, 650 From the spark preserved by the trampled sect, That the antique sovereign Intellect Which then sate ruling in the world, Like a change in dreams, was hurled From the throne he reigned upon: -You looked up, and he was gone! Gone, his glory of the pen! -Love, with Greece and Rome in ken, Bade her scribes abhor the trick Of poetry and rhetoric, 660 And exult, with hearts set free, In blessed imbecility Scrawled, perchance, on some torn sheet, Leaving Livy incomplete. Gone, his pride of sculptor, painter! -Love, while able to acquaint her With the thousand statues yet Fresh from chisel, pictures wet From brush, she saw on every side, Chose rather with an infant's pride To frame those portents which impart Such unction to true Christian Art. Gone, Music too! The air was stirred By happy wings: Terpander's bird

(That, when the cold came, fled away)
Would tarry not the wintry day,—

As more-enduring sculpture must, Till a filthy saint rebuked the gust With which he chanced to get a sight Of some dear naked Aphrodite He glanced a thought above the toes of, By breaking zealously her nose off. Love, surely, from that music's lingering, Might have filched her organ-fingering, Nor chose rather to set prayings To hog-grunts, praises to horse neighings. Love was the startling thing, the new; Love was the all-sufficient too; And seeing that, you see the rest. As a babe can find its mother's breast 600 As well in darkness as in light, Love shut our eyes, and all seemed right. True, the world's eyes are open now: -Less need for me to disallow Some few that keep Love's zone unbuckled, Peevish as ever to be suckled. Lulled by the same old baby-prattle With intermixture of the rattle. When she would have them creep, stand steady Upon their feet, or walk already, Not to speak of trying to climb. I will be wise another time, And not desire a wall between us, When next I see a church-roof cover So many species of one genus, All with foreheads bearing Lover Written above the earnest eyes of them; All with breasts that beat for beauty, Whether sublimed, to the surprise of them, In noble daring, stedfast duty,

Love in many

68o

The heroic in passion, or in action,—

offering Or, lowered for the senses' satisfaction, To the mere outside of human creatures, Mere perfect form and faultless features. What! with all Rome here, whence to levy Such contributions to their appetite, With women and men in a gorgeous bevy, They take, as it were, a padlock, and clap it tight On their southern eyes, restrained from feeding On the glories of their ancient reading, On the beauties of their modern singing, On the wonders of the builder's bringing, On the majesties of Art around them,— And, all these loves, late struggling incessant, When faith has at last united and bound them. They offer up to God for a present! Why, I will, on the whole, be rather proud of it.—

And, only taking the act in reference To the other recipients who might have allowed of it.

I will rejoice that God had the preference! 730

XII

So I summed up my new resolves: Too much love there can never be. And where the intellect devolves Its function on love exclusively. I, as one who possesses both, Will accept the provision, nothing loth, -Will feast my love, then depart elsewhere, That my intellect may find its share.

And ponder, O soul, the while thou departest, A lesson And see thou applaud the great heart of the artist, sculptuse Who, examining the capabilities 74I Of the block of marble he has to fashion Into a type of thought or passion,-Not always, using obvious facilities, Shapes it, as any artist can, Into a perfect symmetrical man, Complete from head to foot of the life-size, Such as old Adam stood in his wife's eyes,-But, now and then, bravely aspires to consummate A Colossus by no means so easy to come at, And uses the whole of his block for the bust, Leaving the minds of the public to finish it, Since cut it ruefully short he must: On the face alone he expends his devotion; He rather would mar than resolve to diminish it. -Saying, "Applaud me for this grand notion "Of what a face may be! As for completing it "In breast and body and limbs, do that, you!" All hail! I fancy how, happily meeting it, A trunk and legs would perfect the statue, 760 Could man carve so as to answer volition. And how much nobler than petty cavils, A hope to find, in my spirit-travels, Some artist of another ambition, Who having a block to carve, no bigger, Has spent his power on the opposite quest, And believed to begin at the feet was best-For so may I see, ere I die, the whole figure!

XIII

Through No sooner said than out in the night!

And still as we swept through storm and night,

My heart beat lighter and more light:

And lo, as before, I was walking swift,

With my senses settling fast and steadying,

But my body caught up in the whirl and drift

Of the Vesture's amplitude, still eddying

On just before me, still to be followed,

As it carried me after with its motion,

—What shall I say?—as a path were hollowed,

And a man went weltering through the ocean,

Sucked along in the flying wake

Of the luminous water-snake.

XIV

Alone! I am left alone once more—
(Save for the Garment's extreme fold
Abandoned still to bless my hold)
Alone, beside the entrance-door
Of a sort of temple,—perhaps a college,
—Like nothing I ever saw before
At home in England to my knowledge.
The tall, old, quaint, irregular town!
It may be . though which, I can't affirm . . any
Of the famous middle-age towns of Germany; 791
And this flight of stairs where I sit down,
Is it Halle, Weimar, Cassel, or Frankfort,
Or Göttingen, that I have to thank for 't?
It may be Göttingen,—most likely.
Through the open door I catch obliquely

Glimpses of a lecture-hall; And not a bad assembly neither-Ranged decent and symmetrical On benches, waiting what's to see there; 800 Which, holding still by the Vesture's hem, I also resolve to see with them, Cautious this time how I suffer to slip The chance of joining in fellowship With any that call themselves His friends, As these folks do, I have a notion. But hist-a buzzing and emotion! All settle themselves, the while ascends By the creaking rail to the lecture-desk, Step by step, deliberate 810 Because of his cranium's over-freight, Three parts sublime to one grotesque, If I have proved an accurate guesser, The hawk-nosed, high-cheek-boned Professor. I felt at once as if there ran A shoot of love from my heart to the man-That sallow, virgin-minded, studious Martyr to mild enthusiasm, As he uttered a kind of cough-preludious That woke my sympathetic spasm, 820 (Beside some spitting that made me sorry) And stood, surveying his auditory With a wan pure look, wellnigh celestial,--Those blue eyes had survived so much! While, under the foot they could not smutch, Lay all the fleshly and the bestial. Over he bowed, and arranged his notes, Till the auditory's clearing of throats Was done with, died into a silence: And, when each glance was upward sent, 830

Each bearded mouth composed intent, reference And a pin might be heard drop half a mile hence,— He pushed back higher his spectacles, Let the eyes stream out like lamps from cells, And giving his head of hair-a hake Of undressed tow, for color and quantity-One rapid and impatient shake, (As our own young England adjusts a jaunty tie When about to impart, on mature digestion, Some thrilling view of the surplice-question) -The Professor's grave voice, sweet though hoarse. Broke into his Christmas-Eve's discourse.

XV

And he began it by observing How reason dictated that men Should rectify the natural swerving, By a reversion, now and then, To the well-heads of knowledge, few And far away, whence rolling grew The life-stream wide whereat we drink, Commingled, as we needs must think, With waters alien to the source: To do which, aimed this Eve's discourse. Since, where could be a fitter time For tracing backward to its prime, This Christianity, this lake, This reservoir, whereat we slake. From one or other bank, our thirst? So he proposed inquiring first Into the various sources whence This Myth of Christ is derivable:

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870

Demanding from the evidence, (Since plainly no such life was liveable) How these phenomena should class? Whether 'twere best opine Christ was, Or never was at all, or whether He was and was not, both together-It matters little for the name, So the Idea be left the same: Only, for practical purpose' sake, 'Twas obviously as well to take The popular story,—understanding How the ineptitude of the time, And the penman's prejudice, expanding Fact into fable fit for the clime, Had, by slow and sure degrees, translated it Into this myth, this Individuum,-Which, when reason had strained and abated it Of foreign matter, gave, for residuum, A Man!—a right true man, however, Whose work was worthy a man's endeavour! Work, that gave warrant almost sufficient To his disciples, for rather believing He was just omnipotent and omniscient, As it gives to us, for as frankly receiving His word, their tradition, -- which, though it meant Something entirely different From all that those who only heard it, In their simplicity thought and averred it, Had yet a meaning quite as respectable: For, among other doctrines delectable. Was he not surely the first to insist on, The natural sovereignty of our race? Here the lecturer came to a pausing-place.

And while his cough, like a drouthy piston.

The Tried to dislodge the husk that grew to him, Critic's I seized the occasion of bidding adieu to him, The Vesture still within my hand.

XVI

900

910

920

I could interpret its command. This time He would not bid me enter The exhausted air-bell of the Critic. Truth's atmosphere may grow mephitic When Papist struggles with Dissenter, Impregnating its pristine clarity, One, by his daily fare's vulgarity, Its gust of broken meat and garlic; -One, by his soul's too-much presuming, To turn the frankincense's fuming And vapours of the candle starlike Into the cloud her wings she buoys on: And each, that sets the pure air seething, Poisoning it for healthy breathing-But the Critic leaves no air to poison; Pumps out by a ruthless ingenuity Atom by atom, and leaves you-vacuity. Thus much of Christ, does he reject? And what retain? His intellect? What is it I must reverence duly? Poor intellect for worship, truly, Which tells me simply what was told (If mere morality, bereft Of the God in Christ, be all that's left) Elsewhere by voices manifold; With this advantage, that the stater Made nowise the important stumble Of adding, he, the sage and humble,

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Was also one with the Creator. You urge Christ's followers' simplicity: But how does shifting blame, evade it? Have wisdom's words no more felicity? The stumbling-block, His speech—who laid it? How comes it that for one found able, 931 To sift the truth of it from fable, Millions believe it to the letter? Christ's goodness, then—does that fare better? Strange goodness, which upon the score Of being goodness, the mere due Of man to fellow-man, much more To God,—should take another view Of its possessor's privilege, And bid him rule his race! You pledge Your fealty to such rule? What, all-From Heavenly John and Attic Paul, And that brave weather-battered Peter Whose stout faith only stood completer For buffets, sinning to be pardoned, As the more his hands hauled nets, they hardened,— All, down to you, the man of men, Professing here at Göttingen, Compose Christ's flock! So, you and I Are sheep of a good man! and why? 950 The goodness,—how did he acquire it? Was it self-gained, did God inspire it? Choose which; then tell me, on what ground Should its possessor dare propound His claim to rise o'er us an inch? Were goodness all some man's invention, Who arbitrarily made mention What we should follow, and where flinch,-What qualities might take the style

Christ's intellect and good ness?

What of

What of Of right and wrong,—and had such guessing his saintil- Met with as general acquiescing As graced the Alphabet erewhile, When A got leave an Ox to be, No Camel (quoth the Jews) like G,-For thus inventing thing and title Worship were that man's fit requital. But if the common conscience must Be ultimately judge, adjust Its apt name to each quality Already known,—I would decree 970 Worship for such mere demonstration And simple work of nomenclature, Only the day I praised, not Nature, But Harvey, for the circulation. I would praise such a Christ, with pride And joy, that he, as none beside, Had taught us how to keep the mind God gave him, as God gave his kind, Freer than they from fleshly taint! I would call such a Christ our Saint, 980 As I declare our Poet, him Whose insight makes all others dim: A thousand poets pried at life. And only one amid the strife Rose to be Shakespeare! Each shall take His crown, I'd say, for the world's sake-Though some objected—"Had we seen "The heart and head of each, what screen

"Was broken there to give them light, "While in ourselves it shuts the sight, "We should no more admired."

"We should no more admire, perchance, "That these found truth out at a glance,

"Than marvel how the bat discerns

"Some pitch-dark cavern's fifty turns, "Led by a finer tact, a gift "He boasts, which other birds must shift "Without, and grope as best they can." No, freely I would praise the man,-Nor one whit more, if he contended That gift of his, from God, descended. Ah, friend, what gift of man's does not? No nearer Something, by a jot, Rise an infinity of Nothings Than one: take Euclid for your teacher: Distinguish kinds: do crownings, clothings, Make that Creator which was creature? Multiply gifts upon his head, And what, when all's done, shall be said But . . . the more gifted he, I ween! That one's made Christ, another, Pilate, And This might be all That has been,-So what is there to frown or smile at? What is left for us, save, in growth, Of soul, to rise up, far past both, From the gift looking to the Giver, And from the cistern to the River. And from the finite to Infinity,

What of his gifts?

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XVII

And from man's dust to God's divinity?

Take all in a word: the Truth in God's breast
Lies trace for trace upon ours impressed:
Though He is so bright and we so dim,
We are made in His image to witness Him;
And were no eye in us to tell,
Instructed by no inner sense,

What of his morality?

The light of Heaven from the dark of Hell, That light would want its evidence,-Though Justice, Good and Truth were still Divine, if, by some demon's will, Hatred and wrong had been proclaimed Law through the worlds, and Right misnamed. No mere exposition of morality 1031 Made or in part or in totality, Should win you to give it worship, therefore: And, if no better proof you will care for, -Whom do you count the worst man upon earth? Be sure, he knows, in his conscience, more Of what Right is, than arrives at birth In the best man's acts that we bow before: This last knows better-true; but my fact is, 1039 'Tis one thing to know, and another to practise; And thence I conclude that the real God-function Is to furnish a motive and injunction For practising what we know already. And such an injunction and such a motive As the God in Christ, do you waive, and "heady High minded," hang your tablet-votive Outside the fane on a finger-post? Morality to the uttermost, Supreme in Christ as we all confess, Why need we prove would avail no jot 1050 To make Him God, if God He were not? What is the point where Himself lays stress? Does the precept run "Believe in Good, "In Justice, Truth, now understood "For the first time?"-or, "Believe in ME, "Who lived and died, yet essentially "Am Lord of Life?" Whoever can take The same to his heart and for mere love's sake

Conceive of the love,—that man obtains A new truth; no conviction gains Of an old one only, made intense By a fresh appeal to his faded sense.

The Pearl of Price dust and ashes!

XVIII

Can it be that He stays inside? Is the Vesture left me to commune with? Could my soul find aught to sing in tune with Even at this lecture, if she tried? Oh, let me at lowest sympathise With the lurking drop of blood that lies In the desiccated brain's white roots Without a throb for Christ's attributes. As the Lecturer makes his special boast! If love's dead there, it has left a ghost. Admire we, how from heart to brain (Though to say so strike the doctors dumb) One instinct rises and falls again, Restoring the equilibrium. And how when the Critic had done his best. And the Pearl of Price, at reason's test, Lay dust and ashes levigable. On the Professor's lecture-table: 1080 When we looked for the inference and monition That our faith, reduced to such a condition, Be swept forthwith to its natural dust-hole,-He bids us, when we least expect it, Take back our faith,—if it be not just whole, Yet a pearl indeed, as his tests affect it, Which fact pays the damage done rewardingly, So, prize we our dust and ashes accordingly!

Venerate "Go home and venerate the Myth the myth "I thus have experimented with-1090 "This Man, continue to adore him "Rather than all who went before him. "And all who ever followed after!"-Surely for this I may praise you, my brother! Will you take the praise in tears or laughter? That's one point gained: can I compass another? Unlearned love was safe from spurning-Can't we respect your loveless learning? Let us at least give Learning honor! What laurels had we showered upon her, TTOO Girding her loins up to perturb Our theory of the Middle Verb; Or Turklike brandishing a scimetar O'er anapæsts in comic-trimeter; Or curing the halt and maimed Iketides, While we lounged on at our indebted ease: Instead of which, a tricksy demon Sets her at Titus or Philemon! When Ignorance wags his ears of leather And hates God's word, 'tis altogether; IIIO Nor leaves he his congenial thistles To go and browze on Paul's Epistles. -And you, the audience, who might ravage The world wide, enviably savage Nor heed the cry of the retriever, More than Herr Heine (before his fever),-I do not tell a lie so arrant As say my passion's wings are furled up, And, without the plainest Heavenly warrant, I were ready and glad to give this world up-But still, when you rub the brow meticulous, And ponder the profit of turning holy

If not for God's, for your own sake solely,
—God forbid I should find you ridiculous!

Deduce from this lecture all that eases you,
Nay, call yourselves, if the calling pleases you,
"Christians,"—abhor the Deist's pravity,—
Go on, you shall no more move my gravity,
Than, when I see boys ride a-cockhorse
I find it in my heart to embarrass them
By hinting that their stick's a mock horse,
And they really carry what they say carries them.

Genial tolerance

XIX

So sate I talking with my mind. I did not long to leave the door And find a new church, as before, But rather was quiet and inclined To prolong and enjoy the gentle resting From further tracking and trying and testing. This tolerance is a genial mood! (Said I, and a little pause ensued). 1140 One trims the bark 'twixt shoal and shelf, And sees, each side, the good effects of it, A value for religion's self, A carelessness about the sects of it. Let me enjoy my own conviction, Not watch my neighbour's faith with fretfulness, Still spying there some dereliction Of truth, perversity, forgetfulness! Better a mild indifferentism, To teach that all our faiths (though duller 1150 His shines through a dull spirit's prism) Originally had one colour-Sending me on a pilgrimage

again

The storm Through ancient and through modern times To many peoples, various climes, Where I may see Saint, Savage, Sage Fuse their respective creeds in one Before the general Father's throne!

XX

.. 'Twas the horrible storm began afresh! The black night caught me in his mesh Whirled me up, and flung me prone. I was left on the college-step alone. I looked, and far there, ever fleeting Far, far away, the receding gesture, And looming of the lessening Vesture, Swept forward from my stupid hand, While I watched my foolish heart expand In the lazy glow of benevolence, O'er the various modes of man's belief. I sprang up with fear's vehemence. -Needs must there be one way, our chief Best way of worship: let me strive To find it, and when found, contrive My fellows also take their share. This constitutes my earthly care: God's is above it and distinct! For I, a man, with men am linked, And not a brute with brutes; no gain That I experience, must remain Unshared: but should my best endeavour To share it, fail-subsisteth ever God's care above, and I exult That God, by God's own ways occult,

TT60

1170

T 180

May-doth, I will believe-bring back All wanderers to a single track! Meantime, I can but testify God's care for me—no more, can I— It is but for myself I know. The world rolls witnessing around me Only to leave me as it found me; 1190 Men cry there, but my ear is slow. Their races flourish or decay -What boots it, while you lucid way Loaded with stars, divides the vault? How soon my soul repairs its fault When, sharpening sense's hebetude, She turns on my own life! So viewed, No mere mote's breadth but teems immense With witnessings of providence: And woe to me if when I look 1200 Upon that record, the sole book Unsealed to me, I take no heed Of any warning that I read! Have I been sure, this Christmas-Eve, God's own hand did the rainbow weave, Whereby the truth from heaven slid Into my soul?—I cannot bid The world admit He stooped to heal My soul, as if in a thunder-peal Where one heard noise, and one saw flame, 1210 I only knew He named my name. And what is the world to me, for sorrow Or joy in its censures, when to-morrow It drops the remark, with just-turned head Then, on again—That man is dead? Yes,—but for me—my name called,—drawn As a conscript's lot from the lap's black yawn,

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Back to He has dipt into on a battle-dawn:
the little chape!
Bid out of life by a nod, a glance,—
Stumbling, mute-mazed, at nature's chance,—
With a rapid finger circled round,
Fixed to the first poor inch of ground,
To fight from, where his foot was found;
Whose ear but a minute since lay free
To the wide camp's buzz and gossipry—
Summoned, a solitary man,
To end his life where his life began,
From the safe glad rear, to the dreadful van!
Soul of mine, hadst thou caught and held

By the hem of the Vesture . . .

XXI

And I caught
At the flying Robe, and unrepelled
Was lapped again in its folds full-fraught
With warmth and wonder and delight,
God's mercy being infinite.
And scarce had the words escaped my tongue,
When, at a passionate bound, I sprung
Out of the wandering world of rain,
Into the little chapel again.

XXII

How else was I found there, bolt upright On my bench, as if I had never left'it? —Never flung out on the common at night Nor met the storm and wedge-like cleft it, Seen the raree-show of Peter's successor, Or the laboratory of the Professor!

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For the Vision, that was true, I wist, True as that heaven and earth exist. There sate my friend, the yellow and tall, With his neck and its wen in the selfsame place; Yet my nearest neighbour's cheek showed gall, She had slid away a contemptuous space: And the old fat woman, late so placable, Eyed me with symptoms, hardly mistakeable, Of her milk of kindness turning rancid: In short a spectator might have fancied That I had nodded betrayed by a slumber, Yet kept my seat, a warning ghastly, Through the heads of the sermon, nine in number, To wake up now at the tenth and lastly. But again, could such a disgrace have happened? Each friend at my elbow had surely nudged it; 1260 And, as for the sermon, where did my nap end? Unless I heard it, could I have judged it? Could I report as I do at the close, First, the preacher speaks through his nose: Second, his gesture is too emphatic: Thirdly, to waive what's pedagogic, The subject-matter itself lacks logic: Fourthly, the English is ungrammatic. Great news! the preacher is found no Pascal, Whom, if I pleased, I might to the task call 1270 Of making square to a finite eye The circle of infinity, And find so all-but-just-succeeding! Great news! the sermon proves no reading Where bee-like in the flowers I may bury me, Like Taylor's, the immortal Jeremy! And now that I know the very worst of him, What was it I thought to obtain at first of him?

The end of the sermon

preacher

No matter Ha? Is God mocked, as He asks? about the Shall I take on me to change His tasks, T280 And dare, despatched to a river-head For a simple draught of the element, Neglect the thing for which He sent, And return with another thing instead ?-Saving . . " Because the water found "Welling up from underground, "Is mingled with the taints of earth, "While Thou, I know, dost laugh at dearth, "And couldest, at a word, convulse "The world with the leap of its river-pulse, ____ 1290 "Therefore I turned from the oozings muddy, "And bring thee a chalice I found, instead: "See the brave veins in the breccia ruddy! "One would suppose that the marble bled. "What matters the water? A hope I have nursed, "That the waterless cup will quench my thirst." -Better have knelt at the poorest stream That trickles in pain from the straitest rift! For the less or the more is all God's gift, Who blocks up or breaks wide the granite-seam. And here, is there water or not, to drink? 1301 I, then, in ignorance and weakness, Taking God's help, have attained to think My heart does best to receive in meekness This mode of worship, as most to His mind, Where earthly aids being cast behind, His All in All appears serene, With the thinnest human veil between,

> Letting the mystic Lamps, the Seven, The many motions of His spirit,

Pass, as they list, to earth from Heaven. For the preacher's merit or demerit,

"I choose

It were to be wished the flaws were fewer In the earthen vessel, holding treasure, Which lies as safe in a golden ewer; But the main thing is, does it hold good measure? Heaven soon sets right all other matters!-Ask, else, these ruins of humanity, This flesh worn out to rags and tatters, This soul at struggle with insanity, 1320 Who thence take comfort, can I doubt, Which an empire gained, were a loss without. May it be mine! And let us hope That no worse blessing befal the Pope, Turn'd sick at last of the day's buffoonery, Of his posturings and his petticoatings, Beside the Bourbon bully's gloatings In the bloody orgies of drunk poltroonery! Nor may the Professor forego its peace At Göttingen, presently, when, in the dusk Of his life, if his cough, as I fear, should increase, Prophesied of by that horrible husk; And when, thicker and thicker, the darkness fills The world through his misty spectacles, And he gropes for something more substantial Than a fable, myth, or personification, May Christ do for him, what no mere man shall, And stand confessed as the God of salvation! Meantime, in the still recurring fear Lest myself, at unawares, be found, 1340 While attacking the choice of my neighbours round, Without my own made—I choose here! The giving out of the hymn reclaims me; I have done!—And if any blames me, Thinking that merely to touch in brevity The topics I dwell on, were unlawful,-

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The last Or, worse, that I trench, with undue levity, hymn On the bounds of the Holy and the awful, I praise the heart, and pity the head of him. And refer myself to THEE, instead of him; 1350 Who head and heart alike discernest. Looking below light speech we utter, When the frothy spume and frequent sputter Prove that the soul's depths boil in earnest! May the truth shine out, stand ever before us! I put up pencil and join chorus To Hephzibah Tune, without further apology, The last five verses of the third section Of the seventeenth hymn in Whitfield's Collection, To conclude with the doxology. 1360

EASTER-DAY

1

How very hard it is to be
A Christian! Hard for you and me,
—Not the mere task of making real
That duty up to its ideal,
Effecting thus, complete and whole,
A purpose of the human soul—
For that is always hard to do;
But hard, I mean, for me and you
To realise it, more or less,
With even the moderate success
Which commonly repays our strife
To carry out the aims of life.

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20

"This aim is greater," you may say, "And so more arduous every way." -But the importance of the fruits Still proves to man, in all pursuits, Proportional encouragement. "Then, what if it be God's intent "That labour to this one result "Shall seem unduly difficult?" —Ah, that's a question in the dark— And the sole thing that I remark Upon the difficulty, this; We do not see it where it is, At the beginning of the race: As we proceed, it shifts its place, And where we looked for palms to fall, We find the tug's to come,—that 's all.

Difficulties for the Christian

H

At first you say, "The whole, or chief
"Of difficulties, is Belief.
"Could I believe once thoroughly,
"The rest were simple. What? Am I
"An idiot, do you think? A beast?
"Prove to me only that the least
"Command of God is God's indeed,
"And what injunction shall I need
"To pay obedience? Death so nigh
"When time must end, eternity
"Begin,—and cannot I compute?
"Weigh loss and gain together? suit
"My actions to the balance drawn,
"And give my body to be sawn

30

Paith not "Asunder, hacked in pieces, tied voluntary "To horses, stoned, burned, crucified,

"Like any martyr of the list?

"How gladly,-if I made acquist,

"Through the brief minutes' fierce annoy,

"Of God's eternity of joy."

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70

-And certainly you name the point Whereon all turns: for could you joint This flexile finite life once tight Into the fixed and infinite. You, safe inside, would spurn what's out, With carelessness enough, no doubt-Would spurn mere life: but where time brings To their next stage your reasonings, Your eyes, late wide, begin to wink Nor see the path so well, I think.

You say, "Faith may be, one agrees, "A touchstone for God's purposes, "Even as ourselves conceive of them. "Could He acquit us or condemn "For holding what no hand can loose, "Rejecting when we can't but choose? "As well award the victor's wreath "To whosoever should take breath "Duly each minute while he lived-"Grant Heaven, because a man contrived "To see the sunlight every day "He walked forth on the public way.

"You must mix some uncertainty "With faith, if you would have faith be. "Why, what but faith, do we abhor "And idolize each other for-"-Faith in our evil, or our good, "Which is or is not understood "Aright by those we love or those "We hate, thence called our friends or foes? "Your mistress saw your spirit's grace, "When, turning from the ugly face, 80 "I found belief in it too hard: "And both of us have our reward. "-Yet here a doubt peeps: well for us "Weak beings, to go using thus "A touchstone for our little ends. "And try with faith the foes and friends; "-But God, bethink you! I would fain "Conceive of the Creator's reign "As based upon exacter laws "Than creatures build by with applause. 90 "In all God's acts—(as Plato cries "He doth)-He should geometrise.

I see!

You would grow smoothly as a tree,
Soar heavenward, straightly up like fire—
God bless you—there's your world entire
Needing no faith, if you think fit;
Go there, walk up and down in it!
The whole creation travails, groans—
Contrive your music from its moans,

"Whence, I desiderate . . ."

Identific Without or let or hindrance, friend! That's an old story, and its end As old—you come back (be sincere) With every question you put here (Here where there once was, and is still, We think, a living oracle, Whose answers you stood carping at) This time flung back unanswered flat,-Besides, perhaps, as many more As those that drove you out before, Now added, where was little need! Questions impossible, indeed, To us who sate still, all and each Persuaded that our earth had speech Of God's, writ down, no matter if In cursive type or hieroglyph,-Which one fact frees us from the yoke Of guessing why He never spoke.

IIO

You come back in no better plight Than when you left us, -am I right?

120

So the old process, I conclude, Goes on, the reasoning's pursued Further. You own, "'Tis well averred, "A scientific faith's absurd, "-Frustrates the very end 'twas meant "To serve: so I would rest content "With a mere probability, "But, probable; the chance must lie "Clear on one side,—lie all in rough, "So long as there is just enough

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"Only at points: from gap to gap "One hangs up a huge curtain so, "Grandly, nor seeks to have it go "Foldless and flat along the wall: "—What care I that some interval "Of life less plainly might depend "On God? I'd hang there to the end;	Small aims
"And thus I should not find it hard "To be a Christian and debarred "From trailing on the earth, till furled "Away by death!—Renounce the world? "Were that a mighty hardship? Plan	
"A pleasant life, and straight some man "Beside you, with, if he thought fit, "Abundant means to compass it, "Shall turn deliberate aside "To try and live as, if you tried "You clearly might, yet most despise.	
"One friend of mine wears out his eyes, "Slighting the stupid joys of sense, "In patient hope that, ten years hence, "Somewhat completer he may see "His list of lepidoptera: "While just the other who most laughs	
"At him, above all epitaphs "Aspires to have his tomb describe "Himself as Sole among the tribe "Of snuffbox-fanciers, who possessed "A Grignon with the Regent's crest. x60 "So that, subduing as you want, "Whatever stands predominant "Among my earthly appetites "For tastes, and smells, and sounds, and sights,	

Search for "I shall be doing that alone,

evidence "To gain a palm-branch and a throne,

"Which fifty people undertake

"To do, and gladly, for the sake

"Of giving a Semitic guess,

"Or playing pawns at blindfold chess."

170

VII

Good! and the next thing is,—look round For evidence enough. 'Tis found. No doubt: as is your sort of mind, So is your sort of search—you'll find What you desire, and that's to be A Christian: what says History? How comforting a point it were To find some mummy-scrap declare There lived a Moses! Better still, Prove Jonah's whale translatable Into some quicksand of the seas, Isle, cavern, rock, or what you please, That Faith might clap her wings and crow From such an eminence! Or, no-The Human Heart's best; you prefer Making that prove the minister To truth; you probe its wants and needs And hopes and fears, then try what creeds Meet these most aptly, -resolute That Faith plucks such substantial fruit Wherever these two correspond, She little needs to look beyond, To puzzle out what Orpheus was, Or Dionysius Zagrias.

100

You'll find sufficient, as I say, To satisfy you either way. You wanted to believe; your pains Are crowned—you do: and what remains? Renounce the world !-- Ah, were it done By merely cutting one by one Your limbs off, with your wise head last, How easy were it !-how soon past, If once in the believing mood! Such is man's usual gratitude, Such thanks to God do we return. For not exacting that we spurn A single gift of life, forego One real gain, -only taste them so With gravity and temperance, That those mild virtues may enhance Such pleasures, rather than abstract— Last spice of which, will be the fact Of love discerned in every gift: While, when the scene of life shall shift, And the gay heart be taught to ache, As sorrows and privations take

The place of joy,—the thing that seems Mere misery, under human schemes, Becomes, regarded by the light Of Love, as very near, or quite As good a gift as joy before. So plain is it that all the more God's dispensation's merciful, More pettishly we try and cull Briars, thistles, from our private plot, To mar God's ground where thorns are not!

Renounce the world!

210

VIII

230

250

The all-

Do you say this, or I?-Oh, you! stupendous Then, what, my friend,—(so I pursue Our parley)-you indeed opine That the Eternal and Divine Did, eighteen centuries ago, In very truth . . . Enough! you know The all-stupendous tale,—that Birth, That Life, that Death! And all, the earth Shuddered at,-all, the heavens grew black Rather than see; all, Nature's rack And throe at dissolution's brink Attested,-it took place, you think, Only to give our joys a zest, And prove our sorrows for the best? We differ, then! Were I, still pale And heartstruck at the dreadful tale, Waiting to hear God's voice declare What horror followed for my share, As implicated in the deed, Apart from other sins, -concede That if He blacked out in a blot My brief life's pleasantness, 'twere not So very disproportionate! Or there might be another fate-I certainly could understand (If fancies were the thing in hand) How God might save, at that Day's price, The impure in their impurities, Leave formal licence and complete To choose the fair, and pick the sweet. But there be certain words, broad, plain, Uttered again and yet again,

Hard to mistake, to overgloss—Announcing this world's gain for loss, And bidding us reject the same:
The whole world lieth (they proclaim)
In wickedness,—come out of it!—
Turn a deaf ear, if you think fit,
But I who thrill through every nerve
At thought of what deaf ears deserve,—How do you counsel in the case?

A marty

26b

IX

"I'd take, by all means, in your place, "The safe side, since it so appears: "Deny myself, a few brief years, "The natural pleasure, leave the fruit "Or cut the plant up by the root. "Remember what a martyr said "On the rude tablet overhead-" I was born sickly, poor and mean, " A slave: no misery could screen " The holders of the pearl of price "'From Cæsar's envy; therefore twice "I fought with beasts, and three times saw "'My children suffer by his law-" At last my own release was earned: "I was some time in being burned, " But at the close a Hand came through "" The fire above my head, and drew "'My soul to Christ, whom now I see. " Sergius, a brother, writes for me "'This testimony on the wall-" For me, I have forgot it all?

270

Resource "You say right; this were not so hard!

"And since one nowise is debarred

"From this, why not escape some sins

"By such a method?"

x

-Then begins

To the old point, revulsion new-(For 'tis just this, I bring you to) If after all we should mistake. And so renounce life for the sake Of death and nothing else? You hear Our friends we jeered at, send the jeer Back to ourselves with good effect-'There were my beetles to collect!' 'My box-a trifle, I confess, 'But here I hold it, ne'ertheless!' Poor idiots, (let us pluck up heart And answer) we, the better part Have chosen, though 'twere only hope,-Nor envy moles like you that grope Amid your veritable muck, More than the grasshoppers would truck, For yours, their passionate life away, That spends itself in leaps all day To reach the sun, you want the eyes To see, as they the wings to rise And match the noble hearts of them! So, the contemner we contemn,— And, when doubt strikes us, so, we ward Its stroke off, caught upon our guard, -Not struck enough to overturn Our faith, but shake it-make us learn

300

290

What I began with, and, I wis, End, having proved,—how hard it is To be a Christian!

St. Paul versus Æschylus

XI

"Proved, or not, "Howe'er you wis, small thanks, I wot,

32I

"You get of mine, for taking pains
"To make it hard to me. Who gain

"To make it hard to me. Who gains "By that, I wonder? Here I live

"In trusting ease; and do you drive "At causing me to lose what most

"Yourself would mourn for when 'twas lost?"

XII

But, do you see, my friend, that thus You leave St. Paul for Æschylus?——Who made his Titan's arch-device The giving men blind hopes to spice The meal of life with, else devoured In bitter haste, while lo! Death loured Before them at the platter's edge! If faith should be, as we allege, Quite other than a condiment To heighten flavors with, or meant (Like that brave curry of his Grace) To take at need the victuals' place? If having dined you would digest Besides, and turning to your rest Should find instead . . .

330

XIII

Now, you shall see

350

for light And judge if a mere foppery Pricks on my speaking! I resolve To utter . . yes, it shall devolve On you to hear as solemn, strange And dread a thing as in the range Of facts,—or fancies, if God will-E'er happened to our kind! I still Stand in the cloud, and while it wraps My face, ought not to speak, perhaps; Seeing that as I carry through My purpose, if my words in you Find veritable listeners. My story, reason's self avers Must needs be false—the happy chance! While, if each human countenance I meet in London streets all day, Be what I fear, my warnings fray No one, and no one they convert, And no one helps me to assert How hard it is to really be A Christian, and in vacancy I pour this story!

I commence By trying to inform you, whence It comes that every Easter-night As now, I sit up, watch, till light Shall break, those chimney-stacks and roofs Give, through my window-pane, grey proofs

Common and Chapel again

That Easter-day is breaking slow. On such a night, three years ago, It chanced that I had cause to cross The common, where the chapel was, Our friend spoke of, the other day-You've not forgotten, I dare say. I fell to musing of the time So close, the blessed matin-prime All hearts leap up at, in some guise-One could not well do otherwise. Insensibly my thoughts were bent Toward the main point; I overwent Much the same ground of reasoning As you and I just now: one thing Remained, however-one that tasked My soul to answer; and I asked, Fairly and frankly, what might be That History, that Faith, to me--Me there-not me, in some domain Built up and peopled by my brain, Weighing its merits as one weighs Mere theories for blame or praise, -The Kingcraft of the Lucumons. Or Fourier's scheme, its pros and cons,---But as my faith, or none at all. 'How were my case, now, should I fall Dead here, this minute—do I lie 'Faithful or faithless?'-Note that I Inclined thus ever !--little prone For instance, when I slept alone In childhood, to go calm to sleep And leave a closet where might keep His watch perdue some murderer Waiting till twelve o'clock to stir,

380

390

Common As good, authentic legends tell He might-' But how improbable! 'How little likely to deserve 'The pains and trial to the nerve 'Of thrusting head into the dark,'-Urged my old nurse, and bade me mark 410 Besides, that, should the dreadful scout Really lie hid there, to leap out At first turn of the rusty key, It were small gain that she could see In being killed upon the floor And losing one night's sleep the more. I tell you, I would always burst The door ope, know my fate at first.-This time, indeed, the closet penned No such assassin: but a friend Rather, peeped out to guard me, fit For counsel, Common Sense, to-wit, Who said a good deal that might pass,-Heartening, impartial too, it was, Judge else: 'For, soberly now,—who 'Should be a Christian if not you?' (Hear how he smoothed me down.) 'One takes A whole life, sees what course it makes 'Mainly, and not by fits and starts-In spite of stoppage which imparts 430 'Fresh value to the general speed: A life, with none, would fly indeed: 'Your progressing is slower-right! We deal with progressing, not flight. 'Through baffling senses passionate, 'Fancies as restless,—with a freight 'Of knowledge cumbersome enough 'To sink your ship when waves grow rough,

Not serve as ballast in the hold, Faith at I find, 'mid dangers manifold, the helm The good bark answers to the helm Where Faith sits, easier to o'erwhelm 'Than some stout peasant's heavenly guide, 'Whose hard head could not, if it tried, 'Conceive a doubt, or understand 'How senses hornier than his hand 'Should 'tice the Christian off his guard-'More happy! But shall we award Less honor to the hull, which, dogged By storms, a mere wreck, waterlogged. 450 'Masts by the board, and bulwarks gone. And stanchions going, yet bears on,-Than to mere life-boats, built to save, And triumph o'er the breaking wave? Make perfect your good ship as these, 'And what were her performances!' I added-"Would the ship reached home! 'I wish indeed "God's kingdom come-" The day when I shall see appear. 'His bidding, as my duty, clear And it shall dawn, that day, From doubt! 'Some future season; Easter may Prove, not impossibly, the time-'Yes, that were striking-fates would chime 'So aptly! Easter-morn, to bring 'The Judgment!-deeper in the Spring 'Than now, however, when there's snow 'Capping the hills; for earth must show 'All signs of meaning to pursue 'Her tasks as she was wont to do-470 '-The lark, as taken by surprise 'As we ourselves, shall recognise

480

490

500

'Sudden the end: for suddenly Waking 'It comes—the dreadfulness must be 'In that—all warrants the belief— "At night it cometh like a thief." I fancy why the trumpet blows; -Plainly, to wake one. From repose We shall start up, at last awake From life, that insane dream we take For waking now, because it seems. And as, when now we wake from dreams, We say, while we recall them, "Fool, "To let the chance slip, linger cool "" When such adventure offered! "A bridge to cross, a dwarf to thrust "" Aside, a wicked mage to stab-"And, lo ye, I had kissed Queen Mab,"-So shall we marvel why we grudged Our labours here, and idly judged Of Heaven, we might have gained, but lose! Lose? Talk of loss, and I refuse 'To plead at all! I speak no worse Nor better than my ancient nurse When she would tell me in my youth I well deserved that shapes uncouth Should fright and tease me in my sleep-Why did I not in memory keep

'Her precept for the evil's cure?

"Pinch your own arm, boy, and be sure

"You 'll wake forthwith!

xv

And as I said This nonsense, throwing back my head With light complacent laugh, I found Suddenly all the midnight round
One fire. The dome of Heaven had stood As made up of a multitude Of handbreadth cloudlets, one vast rack Of ripples infinite and black, From sky to sky. Sudden there went, Like horror and astonishment. A fierce vindictive scribble of red Quick flame across, as if one said (The angry scribe of Judgment) 'There-Burn it!' And straight I was aware That the whole ribwork round, minute Cloud touching cloud beyond compute, Was tinted each with its own spot Of burning at the core, till clot Jammed against clot, and spilt its fire Over all heaven, which 'gan suspire As fanned to measure equable,— As when great conflagrations kill Night overhead, and rise and sink, Reflected. Now the fire would shrink And wither off the blasted face Of heaven, and I distinct could trace The sharp black ridgy outlines left Unburned like network—then, each cleft The fire had been sucked back into. Regorged, and out it surging flew Furiously, and night writhed inflamed, Till, tolerating to be tamed No longer, certain rays world-wide. Shot downwardly, on every side, Caught past escape; the earth was lit; As if a dragon's nostril split

Subjective light

510

540

choosing And all his famished ire o'erflowed; the world Then, as he winced at his Lord's goad, Back he inhaled: whereat I found The clouds into vast pillars bound, Based on the corners of the earth, Propping the skies at top: a dearth Of fire i' the violet intervals, Leaving exposed the utmost walls Of time, about to tumble in And end the world.

XVI

I felt begin The Judgment-Day: to retrocede Was too late now .- In very deed, (I uttered to myself) 'that Day!' The intuition burned away 550 All darkness from my spirit too— There, stood I, found and fixed, I knew, Choosing the world. The choice was made-And naked and disguiseless stayed, And unevadeable, the fact. My brain held ne'ertheless compact Its senses, nor my heart declined Its office-rather, both combined To help me in this juncture—I Lost not a second,—agony 560 Gave boldness: there, my life had end And my choice with it-best defend, Applaud them! I resolved to say, 'So was I framed by Thee, this way 'I put to use Thy senses here! 'It was so beautiful, so near,

257

'Thy world,-what could I do but choose 'My part there? Nor did I refuse

'To look above the transient boon

'In time—but it was hard so soon

'As in a short life, to give up

Such beauty: I had put the cup

'Undrained of half its fulness, by;

But, to renounce it utterly,

'-That was too hard! Nor did the Cry

'Which bade renounce it, touch my brain

· Authentically deep and plain

' Enough, to make my lips let go.

But Thou, who knowest all, dost know

Whether I was not, life's brief while,

Endeavouring to reconcile

'Those lips—too tardily, alas!

'To letting the dear remnant pass,

One day,—some drops of earthly good

'Untasted! Is it for this mood,

'That Thou, whose earth delights so well,

'Hast made its complement a Hell?'

XVII

A final belch of fire like blood, Overbroke all, next, in one flood Of doom. Then fire was sky, and sky Was fire, and both, one extacy, Then ashes. But I heard no noise (Whatever was) because a Voice Beside me spoke thus, "All is done, "Time ends, Eternity's begun, "And thou art judged for evermore! "

Judgment

570

XVIII

600

610

620

I looked up; all was as before; Common Of that cloud-Tophet overhead, again No trace was left: I saw instead The common round me, and the sky Above, stretched drear and emptily Of life: 'twas the last watch of night, Except what brings the morning quite, When the armed angel, conscience-clear His task nigh done, leans o'er his spear And gazes on the earth he guards, Safe one night more through all its wards, Till God relieve him at his post. 'A dream—a waking dream at most!' (I spoke out quick that I might shake The horrid nightmare off, and wake.) 'The world 's gone, yet the world is here?

'Are not all things as they appear? 'Is Judgment past for me alone?

•—And where had place the Great White Throne?

'The rising of the Quick and Dead?

Where stood they, small and great? Who read

'The sentence from the Opened Book?' So, by degrees, the blood forsook My heart, and let it beat afresh: I knew I should break through the mesh Of horror, and breathe presently-When, lo, again, the Voice by me!

XIX

I saw . . . Oh, brother, 'mid far sands The palm-tree-cinctured city stands,-

God

Bright-white beneath, as Heaven, bright-blue, appears Above it, while the years pursue Their course, unable to abate Its paradisal laugh at fate: One morn,-the Arab staggers blind 630 O'er a new tract of death, calcined To ashes, silence, nothingness,— Striving, with dizzy wits, to guess Whence fell the blow: what if, 'twixt skies And prostrate earth, he should surprise The imaged Vapour, head to foot, Surveying, motionless and mute, Its work, ere, in a whirlwind rapt, It vanish up again?—So hapt My chance. He stood there. Like the smoke Pillared o'er Sodom, when day broke,-I saw Him. One magnific pall Mantled in massive fold and fall His Dread, and coiled in snaky swathes About His feet: night's black, that bathes All else, broke, grizzled with despair, Against the soul of blackness there. A gesture told the mood within-That wrapped right hand which based the chin,-That intense meditation fixed 650 On His procedure,—pity mixed With the fulfilment of decree.

Motionless, thus, He spoke to me, Who fell before His feet, a mass,

No man now.

XX

	" All in come to man	
God speaks,	"All is come to pass.	
granting	"Such shows are over for each soul	
	"They had respect to. In the roll	
	"Of Judgment which convinced mankind	
	"Of sin, stood many, bold and blind,	
	"Terror must burn the truth into:	6
	"Their fate for them!—thou hadst to do	
	"With absolute omnipotence,	
	"Able its judgments to dispense	
	"To the whole race, as every one	
	"Were its sole object: that is done:	
	"God is, thou art,—the rest is hurled	
	"To nothingness for thee. This world,	
	"This finite life, thou hast preferred,	
	"In disbelief of God's own word,	
	"To Heaven and to Infinity.	6
	"Here, the probation was for thee,	
	"To show thy soul the earthly mixed	
	"With Heavenly, it must choose betwixt.	
	"The earthly joys lay palpable,-	
	"A taint, in each, distinct as well;	
	"The Heavenly flitted, faint and rare,	
	"Above them, but as truly were	
	"Taintless, so in their nature, best.	
	"Thy choice was earth: thou didst attest	
	"'Twas fitter spirit should subserve	6
	"The flesh, than flesh refine to nerve	
	"Beneath the spirit's play. Advance	
	"No claim to their inheritance	
	"Who chose the spirit's fugitive	
		•

"'Indeed, if rays, completely pure " From flesh that dulls them, should endure,-"' Not shoot in meteor-light athwart ""Our earth, to show how cold and swart "'It lies beneath their fire, but stand 690 "' As stars should, destined to expand, "'Prove veritable worlds, our home!' "Thou said'st,-- Let Spirit star the dome "'Of sky, that flesh may miss no peak, "' No nook of earth,—I shall not seek "'Its service further!' Thou art shut "Out of the Heaven of Spirit; glut "Thy sense upon the world: 'tis thine

XXI

"For ever-take it!"

'How? Is mine, 'The world?' (I cried, while my soul broke 700 Out in a transport) 'Hast Thou spoke 'Plainly in that? Earth's exquisite 'Treasures of wonder and delight, 'For me?'

XXII

The austere Voice returned,— "So soon made happy? Hadst thou learned "What God accounteth happiness, "Thou wouldst not find it hard to guess "What hell may be His punishment "For those who doubt if God invent "Better than they. Let such men rest

"Content with what they judged the best.

Eden "Let the Unjust usurp at will: barred "The Filthy shall be filthy still: "Miser, there waits the gold for thee! " Hater, indulge thine enmity! "And thou, whose heaven, self-ordained, "Was to enjoy earth unrestrained, "Do it! Take all the ancient show! "The woods shall wave, the rivers flow, "And men apparently pursue "Their works, as they were wont to do, "While living in probation yet: "I promise not thou shalt forget "The past, now gone to its account, "But leave thee with the old amount "Of faculties, nor less nor more, "Unvisited, as heretofore, "By God's free spirit, that makes an end. "So, once more, take thy world; expend "Eternity upon its shows,-"Flung thee as freely as one rose

"Flung thee as freely as one rose
"Out of a summer's opulence,
"Over the Eden-barrier whence
"Thou art excluded. Knock in vain!"

XXIII

I sate up. All was still again.
I breathed free: to my heart, back fled
The warmth. 'But, all the world!' (I said)
I stooped and picked a leaf of fern,
And recollected I might learn
From books, how many myriad sorts
Exist, if one may trust reports,

730

Each as distinct and beautiful As this, the very first I cull. Think, from the first leaf to the last! Conceive, then, earth's resources! Exhaustless beauty, endless change Of wonder! and this foot shall range Alps, Andes,—and this eye devour The bee-bird and the aloe-flower?

XXIV

And the Voice, "Welcome so to rate "The arras-folds that variegate "The earth, God's antechamber, well! "The wise, who waited there, could tell "By these, what royalties in store "Lay one step past the entrance-door. "For whom, was reckoned, not too much, "This life's munificence? For such "As thou,-a race, whereof not one "Was able, in a million, "To feel that any marvel lay "In objects round his feet all day; "Nor one, in many millions more, "Willing, if able, to explore "The secreter, minuter charm! "-Brave souls, a fern-leaf could disarm "Of power to cope with God's intent,-"Or scared if the South Firmament "With North-fire did its wings refledge! "All partial beauty was a pledge "Of beauty in its plenitude: "But since the pledge sufficed thy mood, "Retain it-plenitude be theirs

"Who looked above!"

750

XXV

Though sharp despairs nature Shot through me, I held up, bore on.

'What is it though my trust is gone

From natural things? Henceforth my part

Be less with Nature than with Art!

For Art supplants, gives mainly worth

'To Nature; 'tis Man stamps the earth-

And I will seek his impress, seek

'The statuary of the Greek,

6 Italy's painting—there my choice

6 Shall fix!

XXVI

"Obtain it," said the Voice.

780

"The one form with its single act,

"Which sculptors labored to abstract,

"The one face, painters tried to draw,

"With its one look, from throngs they saw!

"And that perfection in their soul,

"These only hinted at? The whole,

"They were but parts of? What each laid

"His claim to glory on?-afraid

"His fellow-men should give him rank

"By the poor tentatives he shrank

"Smitten at heart from, all the more,

"That gazers pressed in to adore!

"'Shall I be judged by only these?'

"If such his soul's capacities,

" Even while he trod the earth,-think, now

"What pomp in Buonarotti's brow,

"With its new palace-brain where dwells

810

Superb the soul, unvexed by cells
That crumbled with the transient clay!
What visions will his right hand's sway

Earth's insufficiency

Still turn to form, as still they burst

"Upon him? How will he quench thirst,

"Titanically infantine,

" Laid at the breast of the Divine?

66 Does it confound thee,—this first page

" Emblazoning man's heritage?—

"Can this alone absorb thy sight,

"As if they were not infinite,—

"Like the omnipotence which tasks

"Itself, to furnish all that asks

"The soul it means to satiate?

66 What was the world, the starry state

"Of the broad skies,—what, all displays

" Of power and beauty intermixed,

"Which now thy soul is chained betwixt,-

"What, else, than needful furniture

66 For life's first stage? God's work, be sure, 820

"No more spreads wasted, than falls scant:

"He filled, did not exceed, Man's want

"Of beauty in this life. And pass

"Life's line, - and what has earth to do,

"Its utmost beauty's appanage,

"With the requirements of next stage?

"Did God pronounce earth 'very good'?

"Needs must it be, while understood

"For man's preparatory state;
"Nothing to heighten nor abate:

"But transfer the completeness here,

"To serve a new state's use, -and drear

"Deficiency gapes every side!

"The good, tried once, were bad, retried.

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840

Spiritual

"See the enwrapping rocky niche, uition in "Sufficient for the sleep, in which "The lizard breathes for ages safe: "Split the mould-and as this would chafe "The creature's new world-widened sense, "One minute after you dispense "The thousand sounds and sights that broke "In, on him, at the chisel's stroke,-"So, in God's eyes, the earth's first stuff "Was, neither more nor less, enough "To house man's soul, man's need fulfil. "You reckoned it immeasurable: "So thinks the lizard of his vault! "Could God be taken in default, "Short of contrivances, by you,-"Or reached, erc ready to pursue **8**50 "His progress through economy? "That chambered rock, the lizard "Your easy mallet's blow has hurled "To nothingness for ever; so,

"Has God abolished at a blow

"This world, wherein his saints were pent, "Who, though, found grateful and content.

"With the provision there, as thou, "Yet knew He would not disallow "Their spirit's hunger, felt as well,-

"Unsated, -not unsatable, "As Paradise gives proof. Deride

"Their choice now, thou who sit'st outside!"

XXVII

I cried in anguish, 'Mind, the mind, 'So miserably cast behind,

'To gain what had been wisely lost! But 6 Oh, let me strive to make the most · Of the poor stinted soul, I nipped Of budding wings, else well equipt For voyage from summer isle to isle! 870 4 And though she needs must reconcile · Ambition to the life on ground, Still, I can profit by late found But precious knowledge. Mind is best-'I will seize mind, forego the rest And try how far my tethered strength 'May crawl in this poor breadth and length. Let me, since I can fly no more, At least spin dervish-like about '(Till giddy rapture almost doubt 880 'I fly) through circling sciences, 'Philosophies and histories! Should the whirl slacken there, then Verse, Fining to music, shall asperse 'Fresh and fresh fire-dew, till I strain 'Intoxicate, half-break my chain! Not joyless, though more favoured feet Stand calm, where I want wings to beat 'The floor? At least earth's bond is broke!' XXVIII Then, (sickening even while I spoke) 800 'Let me alone! No answer, pray, 'To this! I know what Thou wilt say!

'All still is earth's,—to Know, as much

'As Feel its truths, which if we touch

'With sense or apprehend in soul,

'What matter? I have reached the goal-

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Pable	"Whereto does Knowledge served!" will burn		
man's highest	'My eyes, too sure, at every turn!		
truth	'I cannot look back now, nor stake		
	'Bliss on the race, for running's sake.	900	
	'The goal's a ruin like the rest!'—		
	"And so much worse thy latter quest,		
	(Added the Voice) "that even on earth		
	"Whenever, in man's soul, had birth		
	"Those intuitions, grasps of guess,		
	"That pull the more into the less,		
	"Making the finite comprehend		
	"Infinity, the bard would spend		
	"Such praise alone, upon his craft,		
		910	
	"Goes to the craftsman who arranged		
	"The seven strings, changed them and rechanged	<u> </u> _	
	"Knowing it was the South that harped.		
	"He felt his song, in singing, warped,		
	"Distinguished his and God's part: whence		
	"A world of spirit as of sense		
	"Was plain to him, yet not too plain,		
	"Which he could traverse, not remain		
	"A guest in :—else were permanent		
	"H	920	
	"To sting with hunger for the light,—	y-	
	"Made visible in Verse, despite		
	"The veiling weakness,—truth by means		
	"Of fable, showing while it screens,—		
	"Since highest truth, man e'er supplied,		
	"Was ever fable on outside.		
	"Such gleams made bright the earth an age;		
	"Now, the whole sun's his heritage!		
	"Take up thy world, it is allowed,		
	"Thou who hast entered in the cloud!"	020	
	A HOU WHO HASE CHICE CO IN CHE CHOUCH:	930	

XXIX

Then I-'Behold, my spirit bleeds, 'Catches no more at broken reeds,—

- 'But lilies flower those reeds above-
- 'I let the world go, and take love!
- Love survives in me, albeit those
- 'I loved are henceforth masks and shows,
- 'Not loving men and women: still
- 'I mind how love repaired all ill,
- 'Cured wrong, soothed grief, made earth amends
- With parents, brothers, children, friends!
- Some semblance of a woman yet
- 'With eyes to help me to forget,
- Shall live with me; and I will match
- Departed love with love, attach
- 'Its fragments to my whole, nor scorn
- 'The poorest of the grains of corn
- I save from shipwreck on this isle,
- 'Trusting its barrenness may smile
- With happy foodful green one day,
- 'More precious for the pains. I pray,

'For love, then, only!

XXX

At the word, The Form, I looked to have been stirred With pity and approval, rose O'er me, as when the headsman throws Axe over shoulder to make end-I fell prone, letting Him expend. His wrath, while, thus, the inflicting Voice Smote me. "Is this thy final choice?

Choosing

Take "Love is the best? 'Tis somewhat late!	
Love! "And all thou dost enumerate	960
"Of power and beauty in the world,	,
"The mightiness of love was curled	
"Inextricably round about.	
"Love lay within it and without,	
"To clasp thee,—but in vain! Thy soul	
"Still shrunk from Him who made the whole,	
"Still set deliberate aside	
"His love!—Now take love! Well betide	
"Thy tardy conscience! Haste to take	
"The show of love for the name's sake,	970
"Remembering every moment Who	970
"Beside creating thee unto	
"These ends, and these for thee, was said	
"To undergo death in thy stead	
"In flesh like thine: so ran the tale.	
"What doubt in thee could countervail	
"Belief in it? Upon the ground	
"'That in the story had been found	
""Too much love? How could God love so	٠,
"He who in all his works below	• 980
"Adapted to the needs of man,	900
"Made love the basis of the plan,	
"Did love, as was demonstrated:	
"While man, who was so fit instead,	
"To hate, as every day gave proof,—	
"You thought man, for his kind's behoof,	
"Both could and would invent that scheme	
"Of perfect love—'twould well beseem	
"Cain's nature thou wast wont to praise,	
"Not tally with God's usual ways!"	000

TOOO

XXXI

And I cowered deprecatingly—

e die

Thou Love of God! Or let me die,

- Or grant what shall seem Heaven almost!
- Let me not know that all is lost,
- 'Though lost it be—leave me not tied
- 'To this despair, this corpse-like bride!
- Let that old life seem mine-no more-
- With limitation as before,
- With darkness, hunger, toil, distress:
- · Be all the earth a wilderness!
- 'Only let me go on, go on,
- Still hoping ever and anon
- 'To reach one eve the Better Land!'

XXXII

Then did the Form expand, expand—
I knew Him through the dread disguise,
As the whole God within his eyes
Embraced me.

XXXIII

When I lived again,
The day was breaking,—the grey plain
I rose from, silvered thick with dew.
Was this a vision? False or true?
Since then, three varied years are spent,
And commonly my mind is bent
To think it was a dream—be sure
A mere dream and distemperature—
The last day's watching: then the night,—
The shock of that strange Northern Light

Mercy Set my head swimming, bred in me infinite A dream. And so I live, you see, Go through the world, try, prove, reject, Prefer, still struggling to effect 1020 My warfare; happy that I can Be crossed and thwarted as a man, Not left in God's contempt apart, With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart, Tame in earth's paddock as her prize. Thank God she still each method tries To catch me, who may yet escape, She knows, the fiend in angel's shape! Thank God, no paradise stands barred To entry, and I find it hard 1030 To be a Christian, as I said! Still every now and then my head Raised glad, sinks mournful—all grows drear Spite of the sunshine, while I fear And think, 'How dreadful to be grudged 'No ease henceforth, as one that's judged, 'Condemned to earth for ever, shut 'From Heaven' . .

But Easter-Day breaks! But

Christ rises! Mercy every way Is infinite,—and who can say?

This issue of Robert Browning's Earlier Mono-LOGUES has been edited by Mr. H. Buxton Forman. Under this general title are included Pauline (1833), Dramatic Lyrics (No. 111 of "Bells and Pomegranates," 1842), Dramatic Romances and Lyrics (No. vii of the same Series, 1845), and Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day (1850): these form "the proper complement" of Browning's famous volumes entitled Men and Women (1855), already edited for the "Temple Classics" by Mr. Forman.

L G.

January 1, 1900.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL EPILOGUE

Long before Robert Browning established by his series of pamphlets issued under the title Bells and Pomegranates (1841-6) a reputation in literary circles as the most thoughtful and poetical of chamber dramatists and the exponent of a new method of treating the monologue, he had published and withdrawn a poem of his nonage cast in monologue form and more or less dramatic in character. It is true that Pauline, a Fragment of a Confession, published in 1833, has far less of the essentially dramatic than the monologues in Bells and Pomegranates have, and that the poet very soon became so dissatisfied with it as to aim at its extinction by destroying all copies which he could recover from circulation. Nevertheless, the poem is the true precursor of the third and seventh fasciculi of Bells and Pomegranates, just as they were the true and much more characteristic and mature precursors of Men and Women. Four years after the discontinuance of the Bells and Pomegranates series and five years before the issue of Men and Women, the monologue received at the poet's hands a very remarkable and valuable development in the shape of the little book called Christmas-Bve and Easter-Day, which consists of two monologues usually held to embody more of personal conviction than Browning ordinarily charged this form with, and hence less of the absolutely dramatic. Essentially dramatic, however, the poem certainly is; and the four publications, Pauline (1833), Dramatic Lyrics (No. 2 of Bells and Pomegranates, 1842),

276 BIBLIOGRAPHICAL EPILOGUE

Dramatic Romances and Lyrics (No. 7 of the same series, 1845), and Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day (1850), constitute the body of work in monologue which had prepared the poet for the superlative achievement of the two volumes issued in 1855 as Men and Women, reprinted in their original text and order in a single volume of The Temple Classics. Of the Men and Women the four volumes named above form the proper complement; and their contents are here given in a single little book which should prove acceptable to owners of the companion volume.

Browning succeeded so well in his endeavour to withdraw Pauline from circulation that copies of the first edition are of extreme rarity. The book is printed on a soft laid paper which folds to the size now known as crown 8vo. size, however, is attained in the case of Pauline by folding the sheet in twelve so as to form a large duodecimo. The edges are trimmed level at the foot, and the fore-edge is trimmed to some extent,—the normal page measuring 72 by 41 inches. There are three sheets, signed A, B, and C; but the signature A does not occur until page 9 (sig. A 5). Sig. A I is the title-page, the verso of which has at the foot, centered, the imprint "London: | Ibotson and Palmer, Printers, Savoy Street, Strand." Sig. A 2 bears the Latin extract which appears at the head of the poem in the present volume: and the verso is blank. Sig. A a bears the first eight lines of the poem, with a dropped head, "Pauline," in large capitals. This is page 5, though not numbered. Pages 6 to 71 contain the rest of the poem, seventeen lines to the normal page. The head-lines, in small Roman capitals, read "Pauline" throughout; and the pages are numbered in the usual way in Arabic figures at the outer corners. At the foot of page 71 the printers' imprint is repeated. Page 72 is blank. The three sheets are encased in ordinary drab paper boards with white end-papers and a back-label bearing the single word "Pauline" in large capitals, within a rectangular double rule, and reading upwards. The title-page is worded thus ---

PAULINE:

A

FRAGMENT OF A CONFESSION.

Plus ne suis ce que j'ai été, Et ne le sçaurois jamais être. MAROT.

LONDON:

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1833.

The poem was not acknowledged by its author until 1867, when, in placing it at the head of his works issued in six volumes by Messrs. Smith, Elder, & Co., he explained the situation in the following words:—

"The first piece in the series, I acknowledge and retain with extreme repugnance, indeed purely of necessity; for not long ago I inspected one, and am certified of the existence of other transcripts, intended sooner or later to be published abroad: by forestalling these, I can at least correct some misprints (no syllable is changed) and introduce a boyish work by an exculpatory word. The thing was my earliest attempt at 'poetry always dramatic in principle, and so many utterances of so many imaginary persons, not mine,' which I have since written according to a scheme less extravagant and scale less impracticable than were ventured upon in this crude preliminary sketch—a sketch that, on reviewal, appears not altogether wide of some hint of that

particular dramatis persons it would fain have reproduced; good draughtsmanship, however, and right handling were far beyond the artist at that time."

The principal misprints were in the foot-note signed "Pauline" at page 34, unless we are to regard as errors of Messrs. Ibotson and Palmer (1) the omission of the words

And my choice fell Not so much on a system as a man—

which Browning substituted in 1867 for a line of asterisks occurring in the original edition, (2) the insertion of the line

Well I remember * * * *

after line 456 at page 18, omitted from the reprint of 1867, and (3) the many variations of pointing which the first edition shows when compared with the reprint. These variations are not usually of much importance; and the punctuation of the 1833 copy has as a rule been followed in the foregoing pages as the simpler and more characteristic.

The words "always dramatic in principle" etc., quoted by the poet in acknowledging Pauline as his first attempt at monologue, are from the "Advertisement" which he prefixed to the collection of Dramatic Lyrics published as No. 3 of Bells and Pomegranates. This Advertisement is on the verso of the title-page, and reads thus:—

"Such Poems as the following come properly enough, I suppose, under the head of 'Dramatic Pieces'; being, though for the most part Lyric in expression, always Dramatic in principle, and so many utterances of so many imaginary persons, not mine."

This publication is a single royal 8vo sheet, 16 pages including the title, stitched into a primrose-coloured printed wrapper with a leaf of thin white paper at each end by way of end-paper. The poems are set in double columns divided

by a line and within a rectangular double rule. The first page of text has a dropped head in large Roman capitals, "Dramatic Lyrics." The head-lines, which are ruled off from the text by a thin line, are in Roman capitals, "Bells and Pomegranates" on versos and "Dramatic Lyrics" on rectos. The title-page reads thus:—

BELLS AND POMEGRANATES.

No. III.-DRAMATIC LYRICS.

By ROBERT BROWNING, Author of "Paracelsus."

LONDON:

RDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

MDCCCKLII.

This legend is repeated on the front page of the wrapper, with an additional ornamental line to the rectangular border, with the words "price one shilling" at the head, and with the imprint "Bradbury and Evans,] | [Printers, Whitefriars," at the left and right sides of the foot, between the ornamental line and the plain rules. The verso is blank. The back wrapper has advertizements of Browning's works on the recto and miscellaneous advertizements on the verso.

The second collection, Dramatic Romances and Lyrics, has those words for dropped head and recto head-lines, has a dedication and table of contents on the verso of the titlepage, consists of a sheet and a half (24 pages), contains four pages of advertizements of Moxon's books at the beginning instead of the two thin end-papers, and was offered at two shillings. In other respects it might be described in the

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same terms as Dramatic Lyrics. The title-page is follows:—

BELLS AND POMEGRANATES.

No. VII.

DRAMATIC ROMANCES & LYRICS.

By ROBERT BROWNING,
Author of "Paracelsus."

LONDON:

EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

MDCCCXLV.

The dedication reads thus :

INSCRIBED

TO

John Kenyon, Esq.,

in the hope that a recollection of his own successful

"Rhymed Plea for Tolerance"

may induce him to admit good-naturedly this humbler proce

one of his very sincere friend,

Nov. 1845.

R. B.

In 1849 Browning published through Messrs. Chapman and Hall a collection of his dramas and poems in two foolscap 8vo volumes, including the whole contents of Bells and Pomegranates. The contents of No. 3 and No. 7, all save three small pieces, were republished in the second volume in a

single group with the title Dramatic Romances and Lyrics both on the divisional half-title and for the general heading of the group, but with the running head-line "Dramatic Lyrics." The dedication to Kenyon was reprinted on the verso of the half-title; but the lapse of time had sufficed for the poet to become "his very grateful and affectionate friend." The mote given above from No. 3 of Bells and Pomegranates was appended as a foot-note to the Cavalier Tunes with which the group opens. The general prefatory note to the two volumes has the date "December, 1848," and is as follows:—

"Many of these pieces were out of print, the rest had been withdrawn from circulation, when the corrected edition, now submitted to the reader, was prepared. The various Poems and Dramas have received the author's most careful revision."

So true is the final statement in respect of the *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* that it has been necessary to adopt for the present volume the 1849 text of them, and not that of 1842-5, as representing Browning's monologue work before 1855. The three pieces left out of the 1849 collection were those now given under the title *Nationality in Drinks* which Browning gave them when he restored them to their place in his works. They are placed in the present collection next to *Home Thoughts from the Sea* because one of them appeared with that in *Bells and Pomegranates* as part of *Home Thoughts from Abroad*.

The editio princeps of Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day is a foolscap 8vo volume of 148 pages. It has a half-title reading "Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day" with advertizements of the works of the Brownings on the verso, title-page with the imprint of Messrs. Bradbury and Evans on the verso, pages 1 to 142 of text, and a leaf with the printers' imprint repeated on the recto and the verso blank. The dropped head on page 1 and the head-lines throughout are in Roman capitals and read "Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day"; and the pages are numbered in Arabic figures in the outer corners

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in the usual way. A two-sheet catalogue of Chapman and Hall's books, dated April 1850, is bound up with the poes in dark olive-green cloth, straight-grained, with a scrolled border and oval centre ornament blocked blind on each cover. The back is gilt-lettered "Christmas | Eve | and | Baster Day [without hyphens] | Browning | London | Chapman & Hall." The end-papers are of ordinary primrose-coloured glazed paper; and the title-page reads thus:

CHRISTMAS-EVE

AND

EASTER-DAY

A Poem.

BY ROBERT BROWNING.

LONDON:

CHAPMAN & HALL, 186, STRAND.

1850.

Copies without the catalogue occur done up in a dull dark green diced cloth, with a conventional octagonal border blocked blind on the sides. These are probably of a later issue than the copies with the catalogue; for it is in these that examples of the very rare prints of The Statue and the Bust and Clean are occasionally found at the end.

NOTES

Pauline,-The meaning of the letters V.A.XX (vixit annos viginti) at page 3 recalls the youth of the poet at the time of Pauline's publication. The Confession of his early relations with Shelley as revealed in Shelley's works is more frank and genuine than it is clear and obvious. Browning at fourteen had been taken captive by a chance copy of Queen Mab; later he had obtained and intimately studied Shelley's other works then published; and for two years he had been an atheist in belief and a vegetarian in practice. The passage from scepticism back to theism is the chief theme of Pauline. There is no doubt that the poem was composed in the glow of a great personal regard of the boy for Sarah Flower, afterwards Mrs. Adams and the writer of Vivia Perpetua. To say Pauline is Sarah Flower, we are forbidden; but, if she is not, no one else is, and the poet's persistent denial of the identity must be set down partly to the fact that Pauline has no pretensions to exact or literal portraiture and partly to that delicacy which would make the mature Browning screen from unjust aspersions the name of a lady some of whose characteristics (not herself) he had chosen to associate with situations which he had desired rather than experienced. This attitude on the identity of the heroine he maintained, I believe, unchanged to the end. It is otherwise with his attitude towards the poem. The scornful air with which he submitted to its reissue with "no word" changed in 1867 gave way to a more tender treatment of his offspring before he died; and the standard issue of his works leaves posterity in possession of a much more perfect poem than the Pauline of 1833. Many of the revisions # magical in their effect and throw light as well as glamor on the text-so much so that to give that text in this volume would be to give a false idea of what Browning be accomplished in dealing with the monologue form during the period preceding the composition of his Men and Women.

Boot and Saddle. - This Cavalier Tune appeared in Bell and Pomegranates under the title of My Wife Gertrude.

My last Duckess and Count Gismond .- When these two poems appeared in 1842 they were given under the heading Italy and France, the first being separately headed, I .- Italythe second, Il.—France,

Incident of the French Camp and Soliloguy of the Spanish Chister.-Like the preceding, these two pieces originally appeared under a common title, Camp and Cloister,—the first headed, I. - Camp (French.), the second, II. - Claister (Spanish.).

In a Gondola .- The directions in italics, He sings, Su speaks, He is surprised and stabbed, etc., so helpful to the reader of In a Gondola, did not appear in the version of the poem published in Bells and Pomegranates.

Artemis Prologuizes .- The concluding words were originally printed thus :-- .

While I

In fitting silence the event await.

Browning seems to have discovered early that the inversion had no value, but on the contrary detracted from the dignity of the close.

Waring .- The original of Waring, so far as the poem is a portrait, was the late Alfred Domett, author of Ranolf and Amohia, etc.

Rudel and the Lady of Tripoli and Cristina .- Under the title of Queen-Worship, these two poems appeared in Bells and *omegranates connectedly. No. 1 was called Rudel and the and of Tripoli.

Johannes Agricola in Meditation and Porphyria's Lover.—
These two poems, in Bells and Pomegranates, were given as we sections of a single poem entitled Madhouse Cells. They and already appeared in 1836, in The Monthly Repository, rol. x, New Series.

The Pied Piper of Hamelin.—"W. M. the younger" was William Macready, son of the actor. The last four lines are supposed to refer to an unperformed engagement of the actor towards the playwright. The final couplet stands thus in Bells and Pomegranates:—

And whether they rid us from rate or from mice, If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise.

The Italian in England appeared in No. 7 of Bells and Pomegranates as Italy in England.

The Englishman in Italy was called England in Italy, in Bells and Pomegranates.

The Lost Leader has always been connected with the name of Wordsworth. Browning owns in a letter to Dr. Grosart, published in the Preface to the Prose Works of Wordsworth (3 volumes, 1876), that certain phases of Wordsworth's history were in his mind, but deprecates the assumption that the great Laureate and the Lost Leader are identical.

The Lost Mistress.—The fourth stanza of The Lost Mistress, as printed in Bells and Pomegranates, is

For the 'no glance of the eyes so black But I keep with heart's endeavour,— If you only wish the snowdrops back That shall stay in my soul for ever!—

Home Thoughts, from Abroad,—This, in Bells and Pomegranates, was the common title of three pieces, those begin-

ning with "O, to be in England," "Here's to Nelson' Memory!" and "Nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the northwest died away;" the second "nobly" was an after-though of the 1849 collection.

Home Thoughts, from the Sea.—The last line of this poem in Bells and Pomegranates was

Yonder where Jove's planet rises silent over Africa.

Nationality in Drinks.—Two sections of this string of pieces appeared in Hood's Magazine, for June 1844, so Claret and Tokay, before being included in No. 7 of Belli and Pomegranates.

The Bishop orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's Church.—It was under the title of The Tomb at St. Praxed's that this wonderful poem appeared in Bells and Pomegranates. Poor Thomas Hood had the pleasure of giving it to the world in March 1845 in Hood's Magazine, vol. 111, No. iii.

Garden Fancies.—These two poems also passed through the editorial hands of Thomas Hood, appearing in July 1844, in vol. 11., No. vii. before the publication of No. 7 of Bells and Pomegranates.

The Laboratory and The Confessional had the common title France and Spain in Bells and Pomegranates. The first had appeared before, in Hood's Magazine for June 1844.

The Flight of the Duchess had also appeared, in part, in Hood's Magazine for April 1845.

Earth's Immortalities.—The sub-titles Fams and Love did not appear in 1845, but were added in 1849.

Song.—In Bells and Pomegranates the penultimate line of the first stanza was

And this one last tress of all, a very inferior reading to that of 1849.

The Boy and the Angel appeared first in Hood's Magazine for August 1844.

Meeting at Night and Parting at Morning appeared in Bells and Pomegranates as I.—Night and II.—Morning under the conjunctive title Night and Morning.

The Glove.—When The Glove appeared in Bells and Pomegranates the last couplet but two read

> And never he finished the story How bringing the glove brought such glory,

but with the exception of improving that reading Browning does not seem to have bethought him that the close was not up to the mark for expression. The construction from

And 'twas noticed he never would honour

has in all editions from first to last the radical vice that it starts with a negative impression which is not corrected till six lines have intervened between never and but. At first sight the passage looks like two substantive propositions; and only by re-reading does it become clear that there is but one.

Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day.—A comparison of the methods and treatment of Pauline and Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day would be highly instructive. Widely different as the two poems are, they show us the enthusiastic youth and the cultivated mature artist dealing with the same subject of scepticism and faith, and coming home to a settled belief in Christianity. An analysis of Men and Women would show the same settled belief; for, while every monologue is the imagined talk of some one personage, there is a clear intention so to choose the men and women of the book and so to arrange their talks as to leave a set of convergent streams of thought,—convergent towards belief in the main dogmas of Christianity. Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day is more mature in thought and detail of song-craft than it is in artistic scheme: there it is inferior to the average level of Men and

Women. The complexity of scheme makes the work of 1850 at times hard reading; but it is not often that the poet's learning is at fault. There is a curious instance at page 243 in the passage about the beetle collector,—

Somewhat completer he may see His list of lepidopteræ.

This was altered in the collected editions; and the passage stands thus in that of 1868:—

One friend of mine wears out his eyes, Slighting the stupid joys of sense, In patient hope that, ten years hence, 'Somewhat completer,' he may say, 'My list of coleoptera!'

By this revision Browning got rid of a misused word and an incorrect Latin terminal at the cost of a bad rhyme and language less clear. Between lepidoptera and coleoptera there is intrinsically nothing to choose; good rhyme, pellucid English and bad Latin are perhaps preferable to good Latin, bad rhyme, and not very clear English; but unfortunately there is evidence that when Browning used the misinflected scientific name for butterflies and moths (properly lepidoptera) he meant beetles (coleoptera) all the time; for at page 248 the reader will find the same friend reported as saying—

There were my beetles to collect !

This is the reading of the first as of the last edition, save that the last drops the italics for the second word.

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